

BAD STREET U.S.A.

PRO-WRESTLING
1983

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WRESTLING
OBSERVER

COLLECTORS
EDITION

IRON SHEIK
UPSETS BACKLUND
WINS WWF BELT

AWARDS
RATINGS
IN THIS
ISSUE

HOGAN, PIPER
SIGN WITH WWF

MICHAEL HAYES AND THE FANTASIA BAND

Pulling No Punches

Dave Meltzer, Sports Editor

NO PRISONERS

The wrestling war has begun.

What started out a few years back with many people speculating on what the long term effect of cable TV, has wound up with its most inevitable result---The consolidation of the major pro wrestling promotions into a few select and very powerful hands.

Now promotional struggles are nothing new. They've been around as long as there has been pro wrestling. But they have usually been confined to one area. Now, the entire nation, and perhaps the world has become the battleground as Titan Sports and Vince McMahon Jr. attempt to control the entire business.

Actions in the last month have made it obvious McMahon Jr. will stop at almost nothing in quest of his ultimate goal.

In the most shocking news in wrestling perhaps in the last decade, the Iron Sheik won the W.W.F. title from Bob Backlund on 12/26 at Madison Square Garden. From all clues, it appears this title change was something of a last minute and very secretive thing. The dumping from Backlund off McMahon's wrestling throne in a sense, was McMahon's acknowledgement that his headliner in various promotional struggles was not strong enough to insure running off opposition.

About one week earlier, all of a sudden Hulk Hogan, who in the past year has become the No. 1 box office attraction in the business, backed out of an agreement to remain in the AWA. It was obvious where he was going.

Of course the most recent breakthrough is the WWF heading into St. Louis. WWF tapings from the Chase Hotel will go into Detroit, and the next city on their list--Indianapolis. The WWF in St. Louis? That's something that a few months ago would be unheard of. St. Louis has been the stronghold, really the flagship city of the entire NWA.

What about the NWA, "the largest and most powerful governing body in pro wrestling." We've seen chunks of stone chipped from its side over the past five years, but the latest chip seemed to puncture the heart. Most NWA circuits aren't in good financial shape. Florida has been crumbling the last few months; the situation in Georgia is obvious to even a casual viewer of the weekly TV show; Alabama is on its last legs. With the exception of Dallas and Mid-Atlantic, what NWA cities can

still pack a big arena?

The AWA has never had a more successful season at the gate than this past year. In the last month, those sellouts may become a thing of the past. The loss of Hogan is the biggest blow that could happen to the AWA. The loss of David Schults and "Mean Gene" Okerlund are also significant. Okerlund's loss cannot be taken lightly. As the corniest announcer going, the man had built up an incredible cult following throughout the AWA. Quite frankly the AWA TV show is one of the worst in the country, but many people still watched because they didn't want to miss Gene on the interviews. The AWA may be strong enough to weather this tornado of events, but what about when McMahon comes back against them with his array of superstars--Hogan, Slaughter, Adonis, Santana, Schults and other well known favorites to local fans, and with Gene doing his promotion?

Bill Watts and Jerry Jarrett may be the two smartest promoters in the business. The two have formed sort of an alliance pact that they will help one another when McMahon attacks. But what happens when McMahon makes a lucrative offer to Butch Reed or the Junkyard Dog? What ammunition will Watts and Jarrett have at their disposal?

McMahon's shocking coup in signing Roddy Piper came at the worst possible time for Jim Crockett. If Ricky Steamboat really goes through with his retirement, it leaves Mid Atlantic vulnerable because of a lack of charismatic baby faces. The only one left, Jimmy Valiant, can't wrestle and those type of things usually catch up to a promoter because in the long run the spectators get tired of paying for shows devoid of action. Of course Ric Flair is still around, but it may get frustrating to a man of his ego to be the man an insignificant satellite revolves around instead of the wrestling world itself. With the area lacking in folk heroes--wham--here comes McMahon, fully armed with Hogan, with Slaughter, with Piper.

I fully expect Hogan to wind up with the WWF belt. The average fan, seeing Hogan as champion, will perceive him as the "real" champion. Even a superior wrestler like Flair, because he has neither the size or physique, nor as great an aura of invincibility surrounding him, would be able to draw as champion against Hogan. Once McMahon has the stars, and what fans perceive to be the real champion, plus

exposure, which he's made great strides in obtaining during the past year, then few can stand up against him.

There is the possibility of course that in his quest to take-it-all, McMahon will spread himself too thin and fail in several areas. Many of his new cities (Dayton, Cincinnati, San Diego) have to be classified as at the least, minor failures. Going into an area like Dallas, where the fans are completely satisfied with the home promotion and have been cleverly brainwashed to the point that they would never turn their back on the Von Erichs, still looks to me to be impossible. What would fans in Memphis think after seeing a WWF show live? The new cities the WWF has expanded to this past year have been cities that were virtually there's for the taking. They weren't competing with a popular home promotion.

I know that most fans who have a real love for wrestling have dreaded this inevitable attack for a long time.

I don't really know what the final result will be. The actions of the past month, however, leave me with a very pessimistic view.

***** EDITOR'S NOTES

This edition of the WRESTLING OBSERVER is being prepared as sort of a reference material of the past year in wrestling. Things like the awards, the year in review, details of some selected matches, ratings and everything else will hopefully make this edition something worth saving for several years.

As this is also the anniversary issue of the Observer, I would like to thank each and every one who reads this bulletin for helping make it what I believe to be the top wrestling publication in North America.

As reported, the response to the awards was nothing short of tremendous. We finished the survey by receiving 87 award ballots and 51 top 50 surveys. I'd like to thank everyone who took the time to respond. There were several drawbacks to the survey, the major one being the large number of categories, so perhaps we'll streamline it a little next year. In the long run, I think it was worth it.

The next issue of the Observer, which will be back to our new normal 24 pages monthly, will have a deadline date of February 9th for all material. Our new price is \$2 per issue, with a \$7.50 price for a four issue subscription.

I would like to mention that a few copies of the August 1983 issue (Jerry Blackwell cover) and December 1983 issue (Dynamite Kid cover) are available for \$1.50 apiece.

One thing I've been remiss over the past year in is giving credit to all the people who contribute with news and results, or just encouragement and food-for-thought to making this bulletin. The list is lengthy and I apologize in advance because I'm certain to leave someone out, but thanks especially to Norm Dooley, Larry Lovell, Mike Rodgers, Kevin Hancer, Mike Rosen, Steve Kornreich, Mark Nulty, Ginger Stopp, Norm Keitzel, Jim Melby, Jack Thompson, Ed Garea, Ken Hamblin, Dan Billings, Keith Ferguson, Dave Korner, Larry Heinzmann, Jay Steele, Andy Novak, Walt Wolansky, John Jance, Lloyd Lea, Kurt Brown, George Wilkinson, Ron Dobratz, Marty Slobin, Herb Miller, Tom Burke, Haruo Yamaguchi, Don Jackson, Shinji Kikuchi, Howard Rogofsky, Harold Balde, Ralph Repoli, Marvin Joel Rubin, Larry Matys, Rich Dorf, Dave Creedon, Derek Sousa, Jim Berkeley, George Napolitano, Jim Ross, Steve Helewagen, Jim Schmidt, Masayuki Osada, Terry Dart, James Koog, Earl Elder, Neil Drummond, a few wrestlers, front office folks and even referees who I'm sure would rather their names not be connected with this publication and special thanks must go to Koichi Yoshizawa who has supplied so much to this bulletin between inside information, tapes, news and photos that I have to give him special credit.

If an "X" appears at the left it means this is the last issue of the WRESTLING OBSERVER on your current subscription. To re-order and not miss a single issue, send \$2 for one issue or \$7.50 for the next four issues to 1717 Midwestern Parkway #205 Wichita Falls, Texas 76302.

For those wishing to contact me, I'm usually accessible most afternoons until 3:30 p.m. central standard time, throughout the day Wednesday's and Sunday's and from about 1 to 2 a.m. central time for those who want to call when prices are down, at 817-723-4210.

***** VIDEOTAPES

As many of you know, I have a large collection of wrestling videotapes of more than 220 hours of main events from throughout North America and Japan. For a list of what is available send 54¢ to cover postage for the 12 page list to me at 1717 Midwestern Parkway #205, Wichita Falls, Texas 76302.

In response to several requests, I don't have a tape of Starcade '83 from Greensboro. If anyone knows anyone who pirated the signal and taped the show, please let me know as I would be most interested in working out any sort of a trade to get a copy. If I happen to get a tape of that show, I'll let everyone know next month.

1983 IN REVIEW

NOTE: Instead of writing an article covering the past year, I thought it would be far more valuable to do a January through November chronological history covering as many high points as possible of the past year. Because most of the December '83 news is in the Wrestling Notebook section, it's not included here.

JANUARY

- 1--SAN ANTONIO: Tully Blanchard wins Southwest title in elimination tourney pinning Bob Sweetan in the finals
- 4--TOKYO: Killer Khan turns on partner Seiji Sakaguchi in a tag team match against Masa Saito & Riki Chosyu. It was the beginning of the core which was later to become the Revolutionary Army and open up a new era in Japanese wrestling promotion
- 10--MEMPHIS: Nick Bockwinkel pinned Jerry Lawler to "regain" the AWA belt as comedian Andy Kaufman, in a mummy outfit disguised as Jimmy Hart, and Hart himself, distracted and unnerved Lawler
- 17--MEMPHIS: Jerry Lawler and new baby face Sweet Brown Sugar (Koko Ware) are disq. in what of the greatest brawls of the year against Bobby Eaton & Sabu the Wildman (see match of month)
- 17--SYRACUSE: The WWF's #1 baby face, Jimmy Snuka, is arrested in a motel room after brawling with nine police officers, two attack dogs, etc. after his girlfriend Nancy Argentina was heard screaming by the motel manager. The incident made several newspapers including "Sporting News" and is thought by many to be the reason Snuka didn't win either the Intercontinental or WWF crowns during '83
- 21--DALLAS: Terry Gordy pinned Kevin Von Erich to win the American title
- 21--ST. LOUIS: Kerry Von Erich won the Missouri State title from Harley Race in a match where the belt could, and did, change hands via DQ
- 22--NEW YORK: Don Muraco pins Pedro Morales to win the Intercontinental title. It was the first pinfall loss Morales had suffered at Madison Square Garden in 18 years.
- 30--CHARLOTTE: Dory Funk wins the Mid-Atlantic title from Jack Brisco
- 31--MEMPHIS: Terry Funk, in his final Memphis appearance, teams with long-time enemy Jerry Lawler & Sweet Brown Sugar to win a brutal Texas Death Match from Sabu the Wildman (Cocoa Samoa) & Bobby Eaton & Carl Fergie

FEBRUARY

- 4--DALLAS: Ric Flair pinned Terry Gordy to retain the World's title
- 9--MIAMI BEACH: The Midnight Rider (Dusty Rhodes) pinned Ric Flair in a World's title match refereed by NWA president Bob Geigel. Rhodes was under suspension and by unmasking would theoretically be banned for one year world-wide. He refused to unmask in the dressing room for Geigel who then struck the match from the record books, giving Flair the title back. The match drew a record indoor crowd and gate in Miami Beach.
- 11--ST. LOUIS: In a card televised back to Japan, World's champ Ric Flair went to a 60 minute draw with Bruiser Brody, Giant Baba regained the Pacific Federation title from Harley Race and Missouri State champ Kerry Von Erich pinned U.S. champion Greg Valentine before 18,000 fans--the largest St. Louis crowd in '83
- 14--ORLANDO: Ric Flair retained the World's title going to a double count out with Andre the Giant
- 18--DALLAS: The first-ever meeting of Freebirds vs. Von Erichs 6 man style saw the Von Erichs win out in a sold out Sportatorium
- 18--NEW YORK: Bob Backlund was disq. in his WWF title match with Don Muraco, which finished with the ridiculous and unforgettable "CALL SECURITY!" scene with Kal Rudman
- 20--TORONTO: Ric Flair retained his World's title pinning Terry Funk, a last-minute sub for Roddy Piper who was stranded in Puerto Rico
- 25--ALLENTOWN: Rocky Johnson appeared to win the Intercontinental title from Don Muraco, only to have the decision announced as a DQ later in the program. This was about the only match in a forgettable feud worthy of mention
- 25--TOKYO: Jumbo Tsuruta pinned Tommy Rich to retain the United National crown on the same program where Atsushi Onita retained the International jr. crown in a double count out with Dos Caras and Kabuki DDQ Tiger Jeet Singh
- 28--SAN ANTONIO: Bob Sweetan won the Southwest title from Tully Blanchard in a cage match where he vowed to leave town if he had lost

MARCH

- 5--SAN DIEGO: The WWF made its first West Coast invasion with a Battle Royal won by Andre the Giant before 5,000 fans. They debuted before 4,000 the next night in Los Angeles with Andre winning another Battle Royal
- 8--ALLENTOWN: The Samoans, Afa & Sika, downed the horrible Strongbow "brothers" Jules & Jay to win the WWF tag team title
- 11--DALLAS: Kevin Von Erich regained the American title from Terry Gordy
- 12--GREENSBORO: Ricky Steamboat & Jay Youngblood won the NWA tag team title from Sgt. Slaughter & Don Kernodle inside a cage (see match of the month)
- 12--BALTIMORE: Almost immediately after winning the tag belts, Sika the Samoan breaks his hip in a six man match. The injury was never revealed as McMahon continued to show old tapes of the Samoans on TV and brought in Afa's son Sammy (Samila) as a replacement. Sammy turns out to be one of the year's biggest surprises

- 14--FT. WORTH: The largest wrestling crowd ever in the city (8,200) sold out Will Rogers Coliseum to see the Freebirds retain their WCWA 6 man belts against the Von Erichs
- 21--NEW ORLEANS: Mr. Olympia turned heel beating Junkyard Dog in the finals of the North American title tourney necessitated when Stagger Lee (Dog under a mask) returned the belt to the promotion because "Ted DiBiase snatched to his parole officer." The belt was held up because the ref counted the pinfall when Dog was on his stomach
- 21--MEMPHIS: Bill Dundee turned heel winning the Southern title from Terry Taylor
- 21--SAN ANTONIO: Gino Hernandez & Tully Blanchard downed The Grapplers to win the Southwest tag title on the USA network. After the match Blanchard attacked Hernandez with a title belt setting off a very disappointing feud between the two
- 20--ATLANTA: Killer Brooks pinned Paul Orndorff after hitting him with a chair to win the National title. Brooks "sold" the belt to Larry Zbyszko for \$25,000 in one of the stupidest promotional twists I've ever seen
- 25--NEW YORK: Bob Backlund pinned Don Muraco before 26,109 fans selling out both Madison Square Garden and the Felt Forum well in advance to retain the WWF title in a Texas Death Match
- 25--ST. LOUIS: Ric Flair pinned Kerry Von Erich to retain the World's title
- 27--TORONTO: Ricky Steamboat & Jay Youngblood downed Sgt. Slaughter & Don Kernodle to retain the NWA tag title before 18,877 fans. Ric Flair retained the World's title pinning Roddy Piper in the co-feature. The tag title bout was inside a cage
- 28--MEMPHIS: One of the strangest stipulation bouts ever sent Stan Lane & Steve Keirn, each putting up their hair should one of them lose, teamed with Dutch Mantell, who was to throw \$5,000 to the crowd if he was pinned, and Steve O, who if he was pinned would force all four to leave town. The opposition saw Jesse Barr, who would toss \$5,000 of Jimmy Cornette's mother's money to the crowd if he were pinned, teamed with Adrian Street who put both his and his wife Linda's hair at stake if he lost, and The Shepherders whose defeat would send all four heels packing. Luke Williams wound up being pinned sending Barr, Street, Linda and the Shepherders out of town
- APRIL
- 1--TOKYO: World's jr. champion Tiger Mask sustained leg and neck injuries in a tag match where he and Kantaro Hoshino lost to Bobby Gaetano & Dynamite Kid
- 1--DALLAS: Kevin Von Erich pinned Ric Flair in a World title match, however Kevin had tossed Flair over the top ropes twice prior to the pin and the decision was reversed by original ref Bronko Lubich overruling "ham" ref David Manning. Tora (Yoshiaki) Yatsu downed Kabuki in a kendo sticks match
- 3--TOKYO: Riki Chosyu pinned Tatsumi Fujinami in an incredible match to win the WWF International title
- 13--SHREVEPORT: Ted DiBiase & Mr. Olympia defeated Mr. Wrestling II & Tiger Conway Jr. to win the Mid South tag belts. DiBiase & Olympia made an excellent team, but due to unfortunate circumstances (terrible baby face main eventers and DiBiase's broken hand suffered in a fight with a fan) their title reign wasn't as spectacular as its potential would indicate
- 14--TOKYO: Stan Hansen and Terry Funk battled to a double disqualification in a gruesomely brutal encounter
- 15--TOKYO: International jr. champion Atsushi Onita breaks his leg in a match with Hector Guerrero. Onita wasn't able to return for the remainder of the year forcing the title to be put up for a tournament
- 15--GREENSBORO: Roddy Piper won the U.S. title from Greg Valentine in a bout Piper vowed he would leave town if he lost
- 16--NEW ORLEANS: Junkyard Dog pinned Mr. Olympia to win the vacant North American title before 21,400 at the Superdome. Olympia had "tired himself out" when earlier that card he and Ted DiBiase had downed Mr. Wrestling II & Tiger Conway Jr. to retain the Mid South tag belts. Andre the Giant pinned Kimala that same card
- 16--ST. LOUIS: Jerry Blackwell pinned Kerry Von Erich to win the Missouri State championship
- 22--TOKYO: The war between Dory & Terry Funk vs. Bruiser Brody & Stan Hansen continued with Brody & Hansen winning via COR in a tag tournament match
- 23--TOKYO: Tiger Mask and Dynamite Kid battled in an incredible match for the World's jr. title (see match of the month) along with Riki Chosyu again beating Tatsumi Fujinami, Antonio Inoki winning a loser leaves town match with Masa Saito and the return of Akira Maeda who pinned Paul Orndorff selling out the 14,000 seat Sumo Hall at \$50 ringside
- 24--ST. PAUL: An incredibly "heated" bout with Hulk Hogan getting DQ'd several minutes after pinning Nick Bockwinkel in an AWA title match by AWA president Stanley Blackburn for tossing Nick over the top ropes headlined the most successful AWA show in history, drawing 28,800 fans and a \$300,000 gate. Verne Gagne came out of retirement to team with Mad Dog Vachon to down Sheik Adnan El-Kaissey & Jerry Blackwell, breaking Kaissey's arm."

- 28--KYOTO: Bruiser Brody & Stan Hansen downed Giant Baba & Jumbo Tsuruta to win the \$100,000 Spring World tag team tournament in the championship match
- 30--ATLANTA: NWA president Bob Geigel strips Larry Zbyszko of the National title because "You can't buy a belt." It took the NWA president six weeks to make that ruling during which time Zbyszko had been defending the belt

MAY

- 1--MEXICO CITY: Tatsumi Fujinami won the Universal title from El Canek before 25,000 fans at the Bullfighting arena
- 1--ATLANTA: Ric Flair went to a double disq. with Tony Atlas in a match officiated by boxer Ernie Shavers. Atlas also beat Flair in several non-title bouts on the subsequent Northern tour. Being that Ole Anderson promoted these bouts, naturally there were no title re-matches
- 1--GREENSBORO: Ricky Steamboat & Jay Youngblood downed Sgt. Slaughter & Don Kernodle in a cage match for the NWA tag belts with the stipulations that the losing team could never tag up again. The semi-final saw Greg Valentine regain the U.S. title from Roddy Piper in a bout stopped because Piper suffered an "ear injury" allowing them to continue the feud after Piper's Japan tour. The crowd was only 6,200 for this card because the tag title feud climaxed six weeks earlier
- 2--MEMPHIS: Comedian Andy Kaufman returned to team with the Colossus of Death (Duke Meyers under a mask) in a handicap bout with Jerry Lawler, which ended when Lawler piledrived and pinned the Colossus before 8,000 fans
- 7--MINNEAPOLIS: Sheik Adnan El-Kaissey and his "broken arm" offered Bobby Heenan and Ken Patera \$250,000 apiece raised by Mohammad Khadaffy, the president of Libya if Patera would become the third Sheik. This ridiculous premise worked so well that several other circuits followed the lead
- 9--MEMPHIS: Stan Lane & Jackie Fargo beat The Moondogs (see match of month)
- 10--PORTLAND: Roddy Piper took the only fall from Ric Flair within one hour before the largest crowd (5,320) ever to witness wrestling in the Ash City
- 10--ALLENTOWN: 23-year-old wrestler Eddie Gilbert received severe neck injuries in a car accident after the Allentown tapings. Miraculously, Gilbert recovered in just a few months time and returned to the ring, and this injury was exploited down the road
- 11--ALLENTOWN: Nancy Argentina, Jimmy Snuka's girlfriend died in Snuka's motel room. Snuka was never charged in this incident which was ruled accidental. Nevertheless the bad publicity further damaged Snuka's reputation throughout the WWF
- 11--SEATTLE: Roddy Piper again pinned Ric Flair, who had his foot on the ropes and the decision was reversed, in a one fall World title match. This match sold out the Center Arena
- 13--ST. LOUIS: Harley Race pinned Jerry Blackwell to win the Missouri State title before the smallest Kiel Auditorium crowd since World War II (1,590)
- 15--BOSTON: Don Muraco finished off his feud with Rocky Johnson winning a Stretcher match
- 20--HOUSTON: Nick Bockwinkel and Bob Backlund appeared on the same card with Nick pinning Dusty Rhodes due to interference of Ted DiBiase and Backlund pinning Afa the Samoan. Backlund wouldn't appear unless he could bring in a slow enough wrestler for him to "work" (I hesitate to call Backlund's matches work) with
- 21--HOUSTON: Southwest Championship Wrestling's "World" title tourney ended with Adrian Adonis pinning Bob Orton in the finals of a seven-match tourney. Gino Hernandez pinned Tully Blanchard in the co-feature which drew 1,700 fans as the local fans were apparently turned off by Blanchard and companies extravagant claims about the tourney and refused to turn their back over then-popular promoter Paul Boesch
- 22--FT. WORTH: Southwest's first foray into the heart of Von Erich territory, with a line-up which included Adrian Adonis vs. Terry Funk, Gino Hernandez vs Tully Blanchard in a cage and Bob Sweetan vs. Bob Orton drew only 300 fans. Southwest's next two shows in the Metroplex did almost as well, pulling in 125 and 31 respectively
- 26--KYOTO: Chavo Guerrero pinned Ultra 7 to win the International jr. title tournament necessitated by Atsushi Onita's broken leg

JUNE

- 2--TOKYO: Before a sellout crowd at the huge Kuramae Kokugikan and a national TV audience of 36 million, Hulk Hogan knocked Antonio Inoki unconscious in the finals of the IWGP "World" title tourney. Inoki was planned to win this match and it took more than ten minutes before a shocked referee Pete Takahashi awarded the bout to a stunned Hogan. Tiger Mask regained the World's jr. title pinning Kuniaki Kobayashi in a sensational semi-final
- 2--LEXINGTON: Jerry Lawler pinned Bill Dundee to win the Southern title in the first of a week-long series of loser leave town no DQ matches. The series was as well promoted as any series of matches all year because both men had been the two biggest area stars for eight years. They drew record crowds almost every night of the week including 11,300 in Memphis, turning several thousand away. Incredibly, the bouts even lived up to the build-up
- 6--OTSU: Ric Flair retained the World's title going to a double DQ with Bruiser Brody while Jumbo Tsuruta pinned Roddy Piper in the semi

- 5--ATLANTA: Larry Zbyszko pinned Mr. Wrestling II to win the National title tourney. Zbyszko had quite a night, beating Tommy Rich, Stan Hansen and The Superstar in succession before 4,000 fans
- 8--TOKYO: In his last title defense, Ric Flair lost to Jumbo Tsuruta who scored the only fall in 60 minutes of an incredible match which drew a \$260,000 gate.
- 10--ST. LOUIS: Harley Race, owner of 25 percent of the St. Louis Wrestling Club, won the World's title for the seventh time pinning Ric Flair in a best-of-three fall match. Race held both the Missouri State and Central States belt, both of which went up in tournaments, at the time of the title win. Race's win made him champion for more times than anyone in history, eclipsing Lou Thesz' record of six times
- 11--ATLANTA: The Road Warriors, Hawk & Animal, show up in the studios of Ch. 17 as National tag team champions. The Warriors became the most talked-about newcomers in several years
- 11--PORTLAND: Dynamite Kid debuts in the Northwest, teaming with Buddy Rose in a tremendous match losing to Curt Hennig & Billy Jack. After the match Dynamite attacked Rose, who lost the final fall and joined with Rip Oliver and The Assassin in bloodying up Playboy
- 12--MEXICO CITY: El Canek downed Tatsumi Fujinami via DQ to regain the Universal title before more than 30,000 fans at the Bullfight arena in Mexico. Tige Mask pinned The Fishman in a jr. title match which was about one-fifth as good as the main event
- 13--SAN ANTONIO: Tully Blanchard won the Southwest title from Bob Sweetan when his manager, Chris Love, hit Sweetan with his purse
- 17--DALLAS: A record crowd of 19,150 fans, the largest indoor sports crowd in area history, saw Bruiser Brody return and team with Kerry Von Erich to down Michael Hayes & Terry Gordy and win the American tag team title. Other bouts included new World champion Harley Race beating Kevin Von Erich via DQ, Jumbo Tsuruta pinning Ted DiBiase to retain his United National title in the best bout of the night, Giant Baba pinning King Kong Bundy to keep the Pacific Federation belt, Jimmy Garvin pinning David Von Erich in a Texas title match (belt was later held up) due to interference of Sunshine and King Parsons was pinned by Buddy Roberts in a hair vs. hair match, however Roberts was the one who got scalped
- 18--PORTLAND: In a Northwest tag title match, champions Rip Oliver & The Assassin (David Patterson) were disq. against Curt Hennig & Billy Jack when Dynamite Kid interfered. Buddy Rose wound up saving Hennig & Jack and after eight years as the top heel, became a good guy
- 18--ST. LOUIS: Former St. Louis Wrestling Club general manager Larry Matysik had his first independent show after leaving the office in March. One of his main eventers, Blackjack Mulligan, who was to wrestle Bruiser Brody, failed to show. He had similar problems in future shows. Not coincidental both Mulligan and his son Barry Windham started appearing regularly for the established Bob Geigel promotion a few weeks later. The card drew more than 4,000 which is impressive considering he had no television
- 19--ORLANDO: In a World title match between Harley Race and Dusty Rhodes, referee Ron Bass jumped off the top ropes onto Rhodes who had Race in the figure four after 44 minutes of non-action. This touched off a very-well promoted, but often silly feud between Rhodes and Bass
- 19--ATLANTA: Buzz Sawyer defeated Dick Murdoch in a loser leaves town strap match so Capt. Redneck could head to Orient
- 18--GREENVILLE: Jack & Jerry Brisco won the NWA tag team belts from Ricky Steamboat & Jay Youngblood in what turned into a great technical feud
- 26--ST. PAUL: Jerry Blackwell & Ken Patera downed Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell to win the AWA tag belts when Sheik Adnan El-Kaissey nailed Brunzell with his arm cast
- 30--KANSAS CITY: Super Destroyer won the tourney for the vacant Central States title

JULY

- 1--TOKYO: Riki Chosyu & Animal Hamaguchi joined forces for the first time as the leading main event tag team for NJWA beating Tatsumi Fujinami & Kengo Kimura
- 2--GREENSBORO: Ric Flair's first re-match with Harley Race saw Flair get DQ'd before 13,000 fans. They met several more times in the Carolinas that week, with crowds about triple the norm in every city
- 2--LOS ANGELES: An incredible double DQ between Bob Backlund and Sgt. Slaughter drew 9,100 fans, the largest crowd to witness a show in California in nearly five years. The bout went 35 minutes
- 4--MEMPHIS: Andy Kaufman returned once again, teaming with Jimmy Hart in a handicap bout with who else before 7,000 fans. The King was disq. for using the piledriver on both men
- 4--FT. WORTH: Another of many attendance records was set in this city as 12,000 fans saw the Von Erichs finally defeat The Freebirds to win the WCWA 6 man title (see match of the month). Other bouts that night saw Bruiser Brody DDQ Kimala in their first meeting, David Von Erich pin Jimmy Garvin to win the Texas title in a bout where the winner would be

"slave for a day" and Michael Hayes pinned King Parsons to retain his hair. The segment shown a few weeks later with Garvin and Sunshine as David's slave may have been the funniest wrestling segment of the year (at least outside of the Jarrett circuit)

- 7--TOKYO: Tiger Mask made his debut with his new outfit after his old costume was abandoned when the creator of his comic strip and TV cartoon was arrested for assault and threatening assault. He pinned Isamu Teranishi while Riki Chosyu downed Tatsumi Fujinami via DQ to keep the Int. belt
- 11--MEMPHIS: The strangest main event pairing of the year, a talentless and highly-obnoxious comedian (Andy Kaufman) against a former recording star turned excellent wrestling manager (Jimmy Hart)
- 10--TORONTO: An outdoor show headlined by Ric Flair beating Harley Race via DQ drew 20,700 fans paying a record \$234,000
- 11--EAST RUTHERFORD: The largest indoor sports crowd in the history of New Jersey saw Bob Backlund pin Sgt. Slaughter in a Death match and Andre the Giant win a cage match from John Studd--more than 21,400
- 15--ST. LOUIS: Ric Flair won the Missouri State championship tourney scoring successive wins over George Welles, Butch Reed and David Von Erich
- 15--WINNIPEG: Ken Patera & Jerry Blackwell dropped their first tag match, a non-title match against quintagenarians Verne Gagne & Mad Dog Vachon, the 110-year-old tag team
- 16--NEW ORLEANS: Butch Reed won the North American title from Junkyard Dog in a bout where King Kong Bundy and Buzz Sawyer both interfered before 20,600 at the Superdome. Hacksaw Jim Duggan pinned Ted DiBiase in the final event on the card, a lights out grudge match
- 18--MEMPHIS: Andy Kaufman & Jerry Lawler agree to team up, when Kaufman signs a contract stating he will never enter a wrestling ring again, against Jimmy Hart & The Assassin. Kaufman winds up throwing powder into Lawler's eyes in less than three minutes
- 23--LANDOVER: Don Muraco and Jimmy Snuka battle to a double DQ in probably the best match of a long series before a sellout 19,800, with no undercard
- 30--NEW YORK: Don Muraco and Jimmy Snuka's first Madison Square Garden match draws 27,000 and a record gate. Perhaps Backlund's worst-ever title match with George Steele was a co-feature
- 31--ATLANTA: Roddy Piper beats Buzz Sawyer via DQ before the largest Omni crowd of the year 9,000. The Road Warriors upset NWA tag team champions Jack & Jerry Brisco
- 31--MINNEAPOLIS: Hulk Hogan, who vowed to never wrestle in the AWA, was attacked by Masa Saito who threw salt in his eyes and broke a trophy over his head. Hogan naturally announced shortly after his return, and his bouts with Saito drew large crowds throughout the AWA

AUGUST

- 4--TOKYO: Tatsumi Fujinami regains the WWF Int. title from Riki Chosyu via count out after suplexing him on the arena floor before 13,000 fans selling out the Sumo Gym and a \$280,000 gate. A grudge death match saw Rusher Kimura pin Animal Hamaguchi when Isamu Teranishi interfered and what turned out to be the final match for Tiger Mask, who pinned Teranishi
- 5--ST. LOUIS: Harley Race won a best-of-three fall match from Ric Flair before 8,000 fans
- 10--MIAMI BEACH: Harley Race drew a record \$103,000 indoor gate for his title defense against Barry Windham, which Race won via DQ. Dusty Rhodes & Blackjack Mulligan beat Elijah Akeem & Kareem Muhammaed inside a cage
- 10--TOKYO: Tiger Mask took off his mask and went by his name of Satoru Sayama, announcing his retirement from wrestling. He refused to give any details of why because it would be better if the fans didn't know. Of course, every fan in Japan found out very shortly the why's
- 12--DALLAS: The Freebirds regained the WCWA 6 man title before a sellout crowd at the Sportatorium beating The Von Erichs when Buddy Roberts used a loaded headgear on Kerry
- 20--SAN ANTONIO: Dick Murdoch pinned Adrian Adonis on a flop of an outdoor card which drew 800 in a match where the Southwest version of the World title was declared vacant because Murdoch hadn't signed for the match. Adonis promptly left the area, and mercifully the title was done away with
- 21--GREENSBORO: Great Kabuki beat Jimmy Valiant in a loser leaves town match. Valiant promptly dons a mask as Charlie Brown from Outta Town
- 25--TOKYO: The NJWA, in many ways the most successful promotion during the year, had its wrestlers band together and threaten to quit and form their own group unless Antonio Inoki was deposed as president, Seiji Sakaguchi as Vice president and Hisashi Shinma and chairman of the board. This did happen. One of the leaders of the movement was Tatsumi Fujinami, who in the ring was Inoki's tag partner. Much bad publicity hampered the NJWA over the next two months until Inoki and Sakaguchi regained control, however Shinma, the brains behind the success, was unable to return
- 25--VANCOUVER: Andre the Giant won a Battle Royal before 10,000 fans, the largest crowd in seven years. Nick Bockwinkel retained the AWA belt beating David Schults and Dynamite Kid retained the World Mid-heavy

- beating Gama Singh
- 26--HOUSTON: Jim Duggan beat Ted DiBiase in a loser leaves town cage match
- 27--CHARLOTTE: Former World champion Ric Flair was married, and his subsequent injury to honeymoon in Florida at the hands of Dick Slater and new heel Bob Orton Jr. from a Harley Race bounty paved the way for Starcade '83
- 28--ATLANTA: The Road Warriors suffered their first defeat, in a tornado match against NWA tag champions Jack & Jerry Brisco
- 28--TOKYO: Antonio Inoki, out of action for 12 weeks after his concussion in the Hulk Hogan match, returned pinning Rusher Kimura before an outdoor sellout
- 31--TOKYO: The biggest card of the year in Japan saw Terry Funk's retirement match (see match of month) along with Jumbo Tsuruta winning the International title via count out from Bruiser Brody and Chavo Guerrero retained the jr. title pinning Masa Fuchi

SEPTEMBER

- 5--FT. WORTH: In one of the best cards of the year, a sellout 12,000 fans saw Freebirds over Von Erichs when Michael Hayes pinned Kerry, Kerry beating Hayes in a tremendous whipping match, David beating Terry Gordy in a best-of-three, Kevin beating Jim Garvin via DQ in a bout Garvin kept the American title, Bruiser Brody over Kimala via DQ in a lumberjack match
- 7--SEATTLE: Dynamite Kid beat Curt Hennig to win the Northwest title in one of the area's top bouts of the year
- 10--LAKELAND: Dusty Rhodes beat Kevin Sullivan in a loser leaves town match, avenging a loss the previous Christmas which forced Dusty to masquerade as the Midnight Rider early in the year
- 16--ST. LOUIS: David Von Erich won two-of-three falls from Ric Flair to take the Missouri State championship
- 17--SAN JUAN: Harley Race and Carlos Colon battle in a double-title match to a 60 minute draw before 32,000 at Roberto Clemente Coliseum. Pedro Morales kept the North American title beating Ric Flair via DQ, King Kong Tonga beat Dory Funk to keep the Puerto Rican belt and Andre the Giant beat Abdullah the Butcher via count out
- 22--TOKYO: Antonio Inoki beat Rusher Kimura brutally ending their feud of two years. Kimura hasn't been heard from since
- 24--PORTLAND: Lionel Stuart, or Dutch Savage, left the wrestling business to become an evangelist. Savage was involved in both internal promotional and legal problems which led to his leaving the business.
- 25--ST. PAUL: Two fellows who had been together for 16 years, Blackjack Lanza and Bobby Heenan, went at it with Heenan getting counted out
- 25--ATLANTA: Brett (Wayne) Sawyer pinned Larry Zbyszko to win the National title, after which Zbyszko retired once again from wrestling
- 29--SAN JOSE: The WWF made its Northern California debut, challenging the AWA. The show with Muraco vs Snuka and Andre vs Studd drew 2,000 in a terrible rainstorm at a baseball park

OCTOBER

- 3--GREENVILLE: Ricky Steamboat & Jay Youngblood regained the NWA tag belts from Jack & Jerry Brisco
- 3--MEMPHIS: The San Diego Chicken debuted in a wrestling sense, as the manager of Jerry Lawler for a match with Jesse Ventura for the Southern title. Lawler won the belt when Ventura was counted out chasing the bird
- 4--MEXICO CITY: El Canek retained his Universal crown beating Dos Caras in a battle of Mexico's two best heavyweights before 28,000 fans
- 8--CINCINNATI: Vince McMahon's WWF goes into Georgia cities touching off a feud throughout Ohio. McMahon opens to 2300 in Cincy and 2000 in Dayton
- 8--PORTLAND: Buddy Rose beat Dynamite Kid in a hair vs. hair match
- 8--ST. LOUIS: Hulk Hogan beat Harley Race via DQ in a battle which had more interest in Japan because it matched their two World champions. It drew 6,000 fans and was made a one-fall event because Hogan refused to take a pin, even for a fall
- 12--FT. LAUDERDALE: Ernie Roth, the Grand Wizard of wrestling died at the age of 57 after a heart attack. The Wiz was a long-time WWF manager
- 12--SHREVEPORT: A strange TV taping saw Butch Reed apparently lose the North American belt to Magnum T.A. in a bout officiated by Junkyard Dog, then Reed & Jim Neidhart won the Mid South tag belts off T.A. & Jim Duggan
- 13--KANSAS CITY: One fall re-match with Hulk Hogan and Harley Race ended DCOI
- 14--SASEBO: Ted DiBiase was awarded the United National belt after a fictitious tourney and kept it beating Genichiro Tenryu while International champ Jumbo Tsuruta went to a double DQ with Bruiser Brody
- 17--NEW YORK: Don Muraco vs. Jimmy Snuka in a cage (see match of month)
- 21--RICHMOND: Jack & Jerry Brisco regained the NWA tag belts from Ricky Steamboat & Jay Youngblood
- 21--DENVER: Andre the Giant won a Battle Royal before a sellout crowd. AWA drew very well for its Battle Royal series with Andre and Hulk Hogan over the next few weeks--18,300 in Chicago, 19,200 in St. Paul and 12,000 in San Francisco, the largest Calif. crowd in five years
- 23--ATLANTA: Billed as the finally meeting ever between Tommy Rich and Buzz Sawyer in a cage saw Tommy win before 10,600 fans. Of course

- the two were re-matched a couple of times after that before Buzz turned baby face
- 24--FT. WORTH: Sunshine and Jimmy Garvin split up over a loss and the allusion of an affair between Garvin and a girl called Precious, touching off the most unique feud of the year
- 26--SHREVEPORT: Junkyard Dog regained the North American belt from Butch Reed in a bout with Dusty Rhodes as referee. Reed's earlier loss to T.A. and Magnum's subsequent loss to Niccoli Volkoff were overruled without any intelligent reason given
- 29--MEMPHIS: Ken Raper & Robert Reed, a pair of worthless TV jobbers won the CWA tag belts from The Assassins. As bad as it sounds, it was actually a quite good sequence. The Assassins regained the belts two days later in a bout which Jimmy Hart vowed to shave his head if they wouldn't win
- 29--ST. LOUIS: Larry Matysik promoted his final show with Bruiser Brody pinning Niccoli Volkoff. Brody wound up working for Matysik's rival Bob Geigel within days. Terry Gordy and Terry Taylor among others, were no-shows after agreeing to appear

NOVEMBER

- 3--TOKYO: The Cobra, brought in as a replacement for Tiger Mask, won the World's jr. title pinning an excellent Davey-Boy Smith for Tiger's vacated belt. Cobra did not go over well with the crowd and returned to Canada after the match
- 4--ST. LOUIS: David Von Erich pinned Ric Flair to keep the Missouri crown
- 5--ATLANTA: Buzz Sawyer officially turned heel as Ole Anderson, true to form, ruined a potentially spectacular occurrence
- 6--ATLANTA: Harley Race was advertised by Ole Anderson to headline the Omni but was never actually booked. He was replaced by Ted DiBiase who was booked but not advertised. Refunds weren't offered
- 10--KANSAS CITY: The largest crowd in five years (2,781) saw Harley Race keep the World's title beating Ted DiBiase, Bruiser Brody DDQ Kimala and Ric Flair use the figure four on Mr. Wrestling II
- 11--TOKYO: Antonio Inoki and Seiji Sakaguchi regained their positions of power in the NJWA hierarchy
- 14--PHOENIX: The AWA debuted with Hulk Hogan not only pinning Jerry Blackwell after a bodyslam, but winning the Battle Royal to get a shot at Nick Bockwinkel which didn't materialize
- 15--ALBANY: Tony Atlas & Rocky Johnson won the WWF tag belts from The Samoans
- 18--NEW ORLEANS: The smallest Super dome crowd ever of 8,000 saw Junkyard Dog paint a yellow streak on Butch Reed's back after winning their title bout
- 18--CLEVELAND: Ted DiBiase pinned Brett Sawyer to win the National belt
- 21--NEW YORK: Buddy Rogers, manager of Jimmy Snuka, who was set for a series of coming-out-of-retirement bouts at 62, was injured in the Garden dressing room, fired, and filed a lawsuit against Vince McMahon. A WWF first heel bout saw Lou Albano protege Don Muraco pin Albano protege Mike Sharpe
- 24--GREENSBORO: Starcade '83 drew the largest paid attendance of more than 100,000 via an extensive closed circuit network and a \$1.3 million gate, both shattering every record in the book. Ric Flair beat Harley Race to win the World's title, Ricky Steamboat & Jay Youngblood beat Jack & Jerry Brisco to win the NWA tag belts, Roddy Piper won a dog collar match from Greg Valentine in the highlights
- 24--ATLANTA: The largest crowd of the year--12,000--saw Butch Reed & Pez Whatley win the annual tag tourney
- 24--DALLAS: 19,200 fans saw Kerry Von Erich beat Michael Hayes in a loser leaves town cage match and Chris Adams pin Jim Garvin to win the American title
- 25--ST. LOUIS: Ric Flair's first title defense saw him pin David Von Erich
- 26--COLUMBUS: Ole Anderson's group returns after a long absence promising a Battle Royal, which never takes place, as the main event
- 27--CINCINNATI: Buzz & Brett Sawyer win the National tag belts from the Road Warriors. For the next week the Warriors enter with the belts and lose them with no controversy each night, including Friday. The Warriors still had the belts Saturday morning

I have attempted to cover as many of the important news items from January through November in this section. Next month in the Observer we will have two similar special features, 1) Detailed Reports on the match of the month from January through December and 2) Listings of the Most Valuable, Most Outstanding, etc. circuit-by-circuit for 1983.

In next month's Observer I hope to be able to list for sale a special four-hour 1983 Wrestling highlight tape I'm going to try and produce. I will list the price, what is on the tape, etc. when it is finally completed. If anyone has special matches or incidents they think should be included, let me know. Obviously some things (Inoki-Hogan, Snuka-Muraco, Freebirds-Von Erichs) will be on the tape. Also, the "Pulling No Punches" feature on some of the worsts of '83 will be next month. I felt the column I replaced it with was more appropriate at this time.

The next few pages will contain the results of our annual readership awards and ratings along with a listing of who held various major championships within the past year.

CHAMPIONS OF 1983

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

World's - 1. Ric Flair; 2. Harley Race;
3. Flair
World's jr - 1. Tiger Mask (vacated
title due to injury); 2. Tiger Mask;
(retired); 3. The Cobra or Les
Thornton
Southeast: 1. Bob Armstrong; 2. Jimmy
Golden; 3. Bob Armstrong; 4. Ken
Lucas; 5. Bob Armstrong; 6. Golden;
7. The Flame (Joe Hamilton); 8. Golden;
9. Bob Armstrong; 10. Jos LeDuc;
11. Bob Armstrong; 12. Jerry Stubbs
Alabama: 1. Mr. Olympia (Jerry Stubbs);
2. Tony Charles; 3. Tom Jones; 4.
Flame; 5. Rick Gibson; 6. Rick
Harris; 7. Olympia/Stubbs
U.S. jr: 1. Norm Charlies; 2. Rick
Gibson; 3. Billy Ash; 4. Tommy
Rogers; 5. Chic Donovan; 6. Gibson;
7. Donovan; 8. Tim Horner; 9.
Rip Rogers; 10. Ken Lucas
Southeast tag: 1. Randy Rose & Dennis
Condrey; 2. Ken Lucas & Eddie Hogan;
3. Rose & Condrey; 4. Hogan & Lucas;
5. Rose & Condrey; 6. Robert Fuller
& Jimmy Golden; 7. Rose & Ron Starr;
8. Scott & Brad Armstrong; 9.
Starr & Wayne Farris
American: 1. Kevin Von Erich; 2. Terry
Gordy; 3. Kevin; 4. Jim Garvin;
5. Chris Adams
Texas: 1. David Von Erich; 2. Jim
Garvin; 3. David
American tag: 1. Michael Hayes & Terry
Gordy; 2. Kerry Von Erich & Bruiser
Brody (vacated belts); 3. Super
Destroyers; 4. King Parsons &
Brian Adias
World 6 man: 1. Freebirds; 2. Von
Erichs; 3. Freebirds; 4. Von
Erichs
Missouri: 1. Harley Race; 2. Kerry
Von Erich; 3. Jerry Blackwell;
4. Race (vacated belt); 5. Ric
Flair; 6. David Von Erich
Central States: 1. Manny Fernandez;
2. Dewey Robertson; 3. Bob Brown;
4. Robertson; 5. Harley Race
(vacated belt); 6. Super Destroyer;
7. Buzz Tyler
Central States tag: 1. Bob Brown & Buzz
Tyler; 2. Yasu Fuji & Kim Duk; 3.
Brown & Tyler; 4. Roger Kirby &
Abdullah the Great (Jack Cougar);
5. Brown & Tyler
Southern: 1. Barry Windham; 2. Frank
Dusek; 3. Ron Bass; 4. Mike Rotundo;
5. Bass
Florida: 1. Kevin Sullivan; 2. Mike
Graham (vacated); 3. Scott McGhee;
4. Jos LeDuc; 5. Barry Windham;
6. LeDuc; 7. Windham (vacated);
8. Mike Rotundo
Global (later U.S. tag): 1. Ron Bass
& Barry Windham; 2. Don Kent &
Bob Heffernan (Kangaroos); 3.
Terry Allen & Scott McGhee; 4.
Kangaroos; 5. Allen & Midnight
Rider; 6. Kangaroos; 7. McGhee &
Allen; 8. Kangaroos; 9. Allan &
Brad Armstrong; 10. Angelo Mosca &
Bobby Duncum; 11. Mike Graham &
McGhee; 12. Elijah Akeem & Kareem
Muhammad; 13. Dusty Rhodes &
Blackjack Mulligan; 14. Ron Bass &
One Man Gang

Northwest: 1. Ali Hassan (Jack Cougar)
2. Curt Hennig; 3. Dynamite Kid;
4. Billy Jack; 5. Rip Oliver; 6.
Jack; 7. Oliver

Northwest tag: 1. Billy Jack & Stan
Stasiak; 2. Rip Oliver & Ali Hassan
3. Jack & Stasiak; 4. Oliver & The
Assassin (Dave Patterson); 5. Buddy
Rose & Brian Adidas; 6. Oliver &
Assassin; 7. Rose & Curt Hennig;
8. Dynamite Kid & Assassin; 9. Henn
& Pat McGee (Scott McGhee)

National: 1. Paul Orndorff; 2. Killer
Brooks (vacated sort of); 3. Larry
Zbyszko (stripped, then won tourney
4. Brett Wayne (Sawyer); 5. Ted
DiBiase

National tag: 1. Road Warriors; 2.
Buzz & Brett Sawyer

Pacific Federation: 1. Harley Race; 2.
Giant Baba; 3. Stan Hansen

International: 1. Bruiser Brody; 2.
Jumbo Tsuruta

United National: 1. Jumbo Tsuruta (vac
2. Ted DiBiase

Int. jr: 1. Atsushi Onita (vacated);
2. Chavo Guerrero

Int. tag: 1. Giant Baba & Jumbo Tsurut
2. Stan Hansen & Ron Bass; 3. Baba
Tsuruta; 4. Tiger Jeet Singh &
Umanosuke Ueda; 5. Baba & Tsuruta

U.S.: 1. Greg Valentine; 2. Roddy Piper
3. Valentine; 4. Dick Slater

Mid Atlantic: 1. Jack Brisco; 2. Dory
Funk; 3. Brisco; 4. Funk; 5. Rufus
Jones; 6. Dick Slater

Mid Atlantic TV: 1. Mike Rotundo; 2.
Dick Slater; 3. Roddy Piper; 4.
Slater; 5. Jos LeDuc; 6. Great
Kabuki; 7. Charlie Brown (Jim
Valiant)

NWA tag: 1. Sgt. Slaughter & Don
Kernodle; 2. Ricky Steamboat &
Jay Youngblood; 3. Jack & Jerry
Brisco; 4. Steamboat & Youngblood;
5. Briscos; 6. Steamboat & Youngblo

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

WWF: 1. Bob Backlund; 2. Iron Sheik
Intercontinental: 1. Pedro Morales;
2. Don Muraco

WWF tag: 1. Jules & Jay Strongbow;
2. Afa & Sika Samoans; 3. Tony
Atlas & Rocky Johnson

World's jr: 1. Tiger Mask (vacated);
2. Tiger Mask (vacated)

International (Japan): 1. Tatsumi
Fujinami; 2. Riki Chosyu; 3. Fujinar

International (Canada): 1. Billy
Robinson; 2. The Destroyer; 3. Robin
son; 4. Dino Bravo

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

AWA: 1. Nick Bockwinkel

AWA tag: 1. Greg Gagne & Jim Brunzell;
2. Ken Patera & Jerry Blackwell

OTHERS

North American (Canada): 1. Bret Hart;
2. Leo Burke; 3. Hart; 4. Dynamite
Kid; 5. Allan Coage

North American (Mid South) 1. Stagger
Lee (Junkyard Dog vacated); 2. Dog;
3. Butch Reed; 4. Dog

Mid South tag: 1. Ted DiBiase & Matt
Borne; 2. Tiger Conway Jr. & Mr.
Wrestling II; 3. DiBiase & Mr.
Olympia; 4. Jim Duggan & Magnum
T.A.; 5. Butch Reed & Jim Neidhart

Southwest: 1. Tully Blanchard; 2. Bob Sweetan; 3. Adrian Adonis; 4. Sweetan; 5. Blanchard; 6. Scott Casey

Southwest tag: 1. Ken Lucas & Ricky Morton; 2. Grapplers (Len Denton & Tony Anthony); 3. Gino Hernandez & Tully Blanchard (vacated); 4. Grapplers; 5. Shepherders (Luke Williams & Jonathan Boyd); 6. Williams & Bobby Jagers (Boyd injured); 7. Jagers & Buddy Moreno (Jagers & Williams split; 8. Moreno & Scott Casey (Jagers injured); 9. Ken Timbs & Eric Embry

Southern: 1. Terry Taylor; 2. Jacques Rougeau; 3. Taylor; 4. Bill Dundee; 5. Dutch Mantell; 6. Dundee; 7. Mantell; 8. Dundee; 9. Jerry Lawler; 10. Man Mountain Link; 11. Lawler; 12. Jesse Ventura; 13. Lawler; 14. Ventura (vacant); 15. Lawler

Southern tag: 1. Shepherders (Luke Williams & Jonathan Boyd); 2. Fabulous Ones (Stan Lane & Steve Keirn); 3. Shepherders; 4. Fabs; 5. Shepherders; 6. Fabs; 7. Moondogs; 8. Fabs; 9. Duke Meyers & Bobby Eaton; 10. Fabs; 11. Grapplers; 12. Dutch Mantell & Koko Ware; 13. Bruise Brothers (Dream Machine & Porkchop Cash); 14. Rick Morton & Robert Gibson; 15. Bruise Brothers; 16. Fabs

International: 1. Austin Idol; 2. Jerry Lawler; 3. Ken Patera; 4. Lawler; 5. Patera; 6. Idol; 7. Stan Hansen; 8. Idol

Mid American: 1. Wild Sabu; 2. Jacques Rougeau; 3. Bobby Eaton; 4. Koko Ware; 5. Eaton; 6. Stagger Lee (Ware); 7. Frankie Laine; 8. Dutch Mantell; 9. Buddy Landell; 10. Ware; 11. Landell; 12. Terry Taylor; 13. Randy Savage

1983 OBSERVER RATINGS

These ratings are based on total points from the 51 ballots cast. With each name and placing is the total points, plus the placing of the wrestler (if he finished in the top 75) from the 1981 and 82 surveys.

	PTS	82	81
1. Ric Flair.....	2488	1	1
2. Bruiser Brody.....	2256	6	8
3. Adrian Adonis.....	2195	31	42
4. Sgt. Slaughter.....	2118	18	35
5. Dynamite Kid.....	2082	47	--
6. Hulk Hogan.....	2061	7	9
7. Stan Hansen.....	1940	10	17
8. Ted DiBiase.....	1767	3	11
9. Terry Gordy.....	1734	--	40
10. The Superstar.....	1722	12	24
11. Paul Orndorff.....	1665	11	39
12. Bob Orton.....	1592	29	73
13. Riki Chosyu.....	1578	--	--
14. Butch Reed.....	1526	27	--
15. Harley Race.....	1482	4	3
16. Tatum Fujinami.....	1433	35	36
17. Chavo Guerrero.....	1424	67	--
18. Roddy Piper.....	1376	9	33
19. Tiger Mask.....	1340	22	--
20. David Von Erich.....	1311	34	45
21. Ricky Steamboat.....	1272	23	30
22. Greg Valentine.....	1253	37	18
23. Buzz Sawyer.....	1241	26	55
24. Masa Saito.....	1224	--	61
25. Dick Slater.....	1200	28	25

	PTS	82	81
26. Jimmy Snuka.....	1197	2	32
Nick Bockwinkel.....	1197	8	4
28. Jumbo Tsuruta.....	1086	21	29
29. Dory Funk.....	1032	13	7
30. Ken Patera.....	999	24	14
31. Bob Backlund.....	948	5	2
32. Kevin Von Erich.....	947	55	57
33. Jerry Lawler.....	918	30	48
34. Don Muraco.....	812	17	12
35. Andre the Giant.....	759	15	5
36. Barry Windham.....	699	--	47
37. Dos Caras.....	698	64	71
38. Killer Khan.....	636	36	31
Kerry Von Erich.....	636	44	41
40. Super Destroyer.....	615	42	37
41. Jack Brisco.....	585	16	15
42. Super Destroyer.....	581	42	37
43. Ivan Koloff.....	576	39	28
44. Tito Santana.....	557	56	60
45. El Canek.....	496	--	56
46. Jerry Stubbs.....	456	--	--
Animal Hamaguchi.....	456	--	--
48. Junkyard Dog.....	448	25	44
49. Jim Duggan.....	444	--	--
50. Terry Funk.....	423	20	20
51. Mark Rocco.....	372	--	--
52. Scott McGhee.....	362	--	--
53. Chris Adams.....	359	--	--
54. Jimmy Garvin.....	352	66	--
55. Randy Savage.....	345	74	59
56. Pat Patterson.....	330	--	21
57. Yoshiaki Yatsu.....	329	--	--
58. Brett Sawyer.....	321	--	--
59. Curt Hennig.....	311	--	--
60. Tommy Rich.....	300	38	16
61. Mil Mascaras.....	297	40	13
62. Dino Bravo.....	276	--	--
63. Mike Rotundo.....	264	--	--
64. Dusty Rhodes.....	239	15	6
Iron Sheik.....	239	54	43
66. Rick Martel.....	237	43	49
El Gran Hamada.....	237	--	--
68. Isamu Teranishi.....	218	--	--
69. Rocky Johnson.....	212	58	--
70. Tully Blanchard.....	211	--	--
71. Antonio Inoki.....	206	19	10
72. Carlos Colon.....	195	--	--
73. Bobby Eaton.....	183	--	--
Dick Murdoch.....	183	33	34
75. King Kong Buddy.....	176	--	--

REMAINDER OF TOP 100: Michael Hayes 159, Austin Idol 156, Jay Youngblood 156, Allan Coage 155, Bret Hart 155, Rick Morton 153, Jake Roberts 150, Mike Graham 145, Jacques Rougeau 138, Abdullah the Butcher 134, The Cobra 132, Akira Maeda 109, Villano III 108, Jim Brunzell 101, Spike Huber 93, Rip Oliver 90, Jerry Brisco 82, Hector Guerrero 81, Mark Lewin 81, Greg Gagne 79, Kantaro Hoshino 76, Great Kabuki 74, Genichiro Tenryu 68, Billy Robinson 66, Davey Boy Smith 63



These are the results of the balloting of Observer readers. The points are determined by a 5-3-2 basis for first, second and third respectively. The votes in parenthesis are the number of first place mentions. I will also include my comments on each category along with several readers comments.

WRESTLER OF THE YEAR

1. RIC FLAIR (43).....252
2. Hulk Hogan (18).....147
3. Tiger Mask (3).....57
4. Harley Race (3).....42
5. Jimmy Snuka.....36

Honorable mention: Bruiser Brody 33

My top three was the same as the consensus in that order. Throughout the year as World champ and in the Carolinas, Flair wrestled a killer schedule and still gave excellent bouts almost every night. As a combination of a worker, technician, brawler, bleeder, interveiwer and charismatic personality, I've never seen anyone better. Hogan is the #1 box office star in the business. He touched off a promotional revolution indirectly while ruining a tourney that had been hyped for two years (IWGP). His signing with McMahon may key the change of the wrestling world "as we know it." For impact, Hogan is No. 1, but Flair is better in the ring and did draw the biggest gate in history. Third pick was easy as Tiger was the biggest star ever in Japan, plus he made headlines throughout the year out of the ring with the assault problems of his cartoonist, the wedding that was put off by the promotion, the attempted change of identity, and his subsequent retirement, not to mention his unique style in the ring.

"It's between Flair and Hogan. Ric is great, his box office appeal is obvious. . . he should be a good champ for 2-5 years and if he maintains this kind of schedule he'll truly be the wrestler of the 80s. Hogan is chiefly responsible for AWA's incredible box office success the past two years. 4/24 bout with Bockwinkel was as expertly choreographed as any bout I've seen, his Japan success also unbelievable -- Mike Rosen

"Race is the most durable wrestler of the 70s and his seventh title win can't be overlooked. He may only be a shadow of what he once was, but how many others have remained on top for as long. . . Still Flair must be first for his overall work. . . Snuka made the gates click in the WWF. Area may be overrated, but can you overlook the importance of the most talked about wrestler of the year" -- John Jance

"At the gate and in ring Hogan had the most phenominal year of any wrestler. He didn't lose. He owned Bockwinkel 4/24 and won the IWGP tourney. The AWA and Japan attendance figures shows his affect on the gate" -- Mark Nulty



HULK HOGAN

BEST BABY FACE

1. HULK HOGAN (27).....154
2. Jimmy Snuka (12).....111
3. Tiger Mask (7).....82
4. Kerry Von Erich (4).....51
5. Bob Backlund (6).....50

Honorable Mention: Junkyard Dog 41, Kevin Von Erich 29, Tommy Rich 26, Jerry Lawler 24

I considered the top four choices for my ballot. Hogan was easy to pick first because his appeal is more universal than the others. Hogan's reception at a half-filled Cow Palace is louder than anything I can recall from sold out crowds of years past. I must say the reaction in Dallas for all three Von Erichs is even better, but their appeal is more local, so I relegated Kerry to third. Tiger Mask, as a national hero, I placed second. I would have rated Snuka fourth.

"I rated Snuka first. He had a subpar year compared to '82 but he was the man fans in WWF came to see. Rated Terry Funk second based on his farewell tour" -- Jay Steele

BEST HEEL

1. MICHAEL HAYES (22).....142
2. Sgt. Slaughter (14).....122
3. Don Muraco (3).....66
4. Buzz Sawyer (5).....48
5. Butch Reed (6).....45

Honorable Mention: Ric Flair 30, Ted DiBiase 29, Abdullah the Butcher 23

I agree with the consensus although I flip-flopped Slaughter and Muraco's placings, which may have been a mistake. Hayes is chiefly responsible for making one of the worst promotions in the U.S. into probably the second best. The heat and tension Muraco build up for his bouts with Snuka combined with his very legit slob act made me pick him second, despite his laziness in the ring. Slaughter is also tremendous, more so in the ring than the other two.

"Slaughter has an incredible affect on WWF fans who really hate his guts. Race works hard at inspring hatred with menacing interviews and demeanor"

-- John Jance "No wrestler meant more to his territory than Hayes" -- Mark Nulty "Hayes is by far the best" -- Jay Steele



FEUD OF THE YEAR

1. VON ERICHS vs FREEBIRDS (42)...244
2. Muraco vs Snuka (15).....156
3. Rich vs Sawyer (6).....72
4. Steamboat & Youngblood vs Slaughter & Kernodle.....43

5. Piper vs Valentine (5).....42
Honorable Mention: Inoki's forces vs Revolutionary Army (or Fujinami vs Chosyu) 33, Funks vs Brody-Hansen 27

The first pick was easy between the contrasting styles, the excellent 6-man matches and other things provided more memorable things this past year than I can even remember (figure that one out). What other feud could produce consistent sellouts after one year without a break of weekly matches. The bouts between Steamboat-Youngblood vs Slaughter-Kernodle from all accounts were even better. I loved the build-up to the climactic match, but the feud was cheapened by six anti-climactic weeks. Third place was tough. Muraco

vs Snuka produced great gates and the July-August bouts were sensational. But it deteriorated badly at the end. Inoki's group vs Chosyu's group in Japan was much like Von Erichs-Freebirds, consistent sellouts, record TV ratings, excellent twists which even had a basis in reality (alleged and actual attempts at withdrawing from the promotion, attempting to get their own TV time, allegations of being held back, etc.) made this a much more "intelligent" feud than others. It also allowed Chosyu, Yatsu, Khan, Hamaguchi and Teranishi along with mastermind Saito to emerge from the shadows and all become excellent wrestlers. To me, it got tiring because of the perennial double count outs. I picked Funks vs Brody-Hansen because it was short, every match was excellent and it had a great climax in Terry's retirement.

"Muraco vs Snuka had good matches and I suspect Freebirds vs Von Erichs were just as good but didn't see enough of them. The best thing about Rich vs Sawyer is that they promised never to meet again" -- Mike Rosen
"Muraco vs Snuka matches may not have been the best but it really clicked for a long time. Freebirds vs Von Erichs second followed by Funks vs Brody-Hansen. The latter may not have had as many matches, but can you overlook the brilliance of those bouts and the animosity one could feel watching them" -- John Jance
"I picked Flair vs Race because it took place in different circuits with hero vs heel roles reversed, with bounty hunters, baseball bats, retirement speeches culminating in the biggest card of the year" -- Larry Lovell
"Freebirds vs Von Erichs turned around a territory. Snuka vs Muraco shattered gate records. I thought Steamboat-Youngblood vs Kernodle-Slaughter was the best promoted feud of the year" -- Mark Nulty

TAG TEAM OF THE YEAR

1. STEAMBOAT & YOUNGBLOOD (28)...169
 2. Road Warriors (18).....131
 3. Brody & Hansen (15).....96
 4. Briscos (5).....90
 5. Gordy & Hayes (5).....59
- Honorable Mention: Chosyu & Saito 57, Slaughter & Kernodle 51, Steve Keirn & Stan Lane 27

I considered four teams closely-- Steamboat & Youngblood, Brody & Hansen, Chosyu & Saito and Slaughter & Kernodle. I felt Brody & Hansen were the best, but since they teamed fewer than 25 bouts together compared to more than 250 for Steamboat-Youngblood I went with the latter team. I had a hard time for third, finally going with Slaughter-Kernodle because I cited Chosyu-Saito as a three-man team. I can understand voting on the Road Warriors, especially on impact rather than ability. All those votes convinced me I should have at

considered them.

"Brody-Hansen won two major tournies in Japan. They don't team much, but when they do they are the most awesome combination. Steamboat-Youngblood were the dominant team in the best tag team area in the world. The Road Warriors main evented in Georgia, Mid South, Florida and Memphis" -- Mark Nulty

MOST IMPROVED WRESTLER

1. CURT HENNIG (9).....77
 2. Brett Sawyer (8).....60
 3. Terry Allen (4).....55
 4. Ray Hernandez (7).....51
 5. Chris Adams (7).....48
- Honorable Mention: Mike Rotundo 41, Tito Santana 35, Barry Windham 27, Yoshiaki Yatsu 22

I disagreed with some of these picks because of degree of improvement. Hennig was a great wrestler in the WWF, just being held back a little. Granted, he's improved, but not to the degree of others. I felt Sawyer was every bit as good in Oregon last year, but was camouflaged on his Georgia arrival to give an illusion of improvement when he was let loose. I wound up picking Hernandez second, as he was below average early in the year and wound up quite good. Allen I picked third as he was pretty bad early and now is good. I picked Sammy the Samoan first because he went from a stiff he showed only an inkling of ability to a very good wrestler, and the fact he did it in the WWF, which is the opposite direction most men's ability and work-rate take in that area, I had to pick him first.

"When I saw Adams two years ago he was average at best. He's now one of the best workers in the business. Embry reaked in January. He's now an above-average wrestler." -- Mark Nulty

BEST WRESTLING MANEUVER

1. JIMMY SNUKA's superfly (23)..139
2. Tiger Mask leap out of ring(13)91
3. Super D's superplex (6).....67
4. Bob Orton's superplex or powerslam off top ropes (6).....66
5. Dynamite Kid's suplex on the floor and diving head-butts (3).....40

My favorite move is the dive outside the ring Tiger Mask made famous. However the best guy I've seen do it is Hector Guerrero so I picked him first. I went with Orton's powerslam off the top ropes as he and Allan Coage are the only ones I've ever seen do it and Super D's superplex third. Snuka's splash is great, but it was much better in '82 and I don't get a thrill from it anymore.

"Without a doubt Tiger Mask shows me something almost every time out that blows me away. Chavo Guerrero is another memorable for unique moves. Hogan's lariat and Snuka's leaps are also impressive. What about that move Debbie Combs did on Georgia TV in November?" -- Mike Rosen

"Snuka's superfly is getting worn out, but who else would

try it at that weight" -- John Jance

MOST IMPRESSIVE WRESTLER

1. DYNAMITE KID (24).....144
 2. Tiger Mask (13).....120
 3. Ric Flair (8).....89
 4. Adrian Adonis (3).....65
 5. Hulk Hogan (3).....33
- Honorable Mention: Paul Orndorff 23, Bob Orton 22

Before his retirement and after his leg and neck injuries it was obvious Tiger Mask wasn't the same as in '82 when he won this category by a landslide. Because of that I went with Dynamite Kid first, Bob Orton second and Tiger Mask third. Really there are many good ones to choose from.

"Butch Reed showed so much determination, skill, strength, agility and aggressiveness that he is totally outstanding. For his size, Dynamite Kid is a miracle worker" -- John Jance

MOST WASHED UP

1. CHIEF JAY STRONGBOW (8).....77
 2. Billy Graham (9).....66
 3. Mr. Wrestling II (8).....56
 4. Swede Hanson (8).....50
 5. Butcher Vachon (3).....49
- Honorable Mention: Giant Baba 41, Bob Backlund 39, Dick the Bruiser 36, Harley Race 29, Don Muraco 24

I viewed this category more as picking someone who "lost it" this past year. All of the above aside from possibly Race and Muraco had lost it years ago, and I'm not really sure Race has lost it, it's more that he can't do it nightly. I went with Bob Backlund first because he wasn't good last year, but how bad he's gotten defies description. Junkyard Dog was actually good last year but the fat, lazy non-selling Dog is impossible to have a good match with. Muraco was excellent last year but has eaten and drank his way out of his work rate. Antonio Inoki was close, but he hasn't reached nearly the depths of those I mentioned. Mil Mascaras also has dropped a long way, but he hasn't as far as those I mentioned.

"It kills me to award Don Muraco first because he's a top five star who has just pigged out. Maybe he's still young enough to turn it around but the earlier brilliance may be gone forever. Tommy Rich never was any good, but now he's a total shell. Greco Valentine and Ken Patera have slipped considerably" -- John Jance

"Swede Hanson, Graham and Dom DeNucci are all so bad it's a shame" -- Jay Steele

"Butcher Vachon, why did you come out of retirement? Jose Lothario, why don't you retire? Mr. Wrestling I please give us a break! Mad Dog Vachon qualifies except for his age he can at least give fans some thrills" -- Mike Rosen

"Many worthy contenders but I picked Bulldog Brower, Bobo Brazil and Butcher Vachon. Others include Mr. Wrestling Tim Woods, Wrestling II, Strongbow, Jerry Brown, Buddy Roberts, Graham, Wahoo McDaniel, Billy Robinson and Baron Scicluna. Scicluna retired but was active in '82 although active isn't the right word to describe his wrestling" -- Kevin

Hancer,

MOST OBNOXIOUS

1. VINCE MCMAHON JR. (14).....108
 2. Ole Anderson (13).....75
 3. Tommy Rich (6).....42
 - Kal Rudman (7).....42
 5. Gorilla Monsoon (5).....39
- Honorable Mention: Bob Backlund 36,
Gordon Solie 27, David Crockett 24

I picked Ole Anderson and I'm sure I don't have to explain why. Gordon Solie comes next because I can't stand an announcer who is openly so disdainful of wrestling. He's unprofessional, such as when he doesn't bother to find out the name of a TV jobber or know how many times Flair won the World title. I would kick in the TV set next time he says "Harley Race has wrestled more than half of his adult life" or "When Ric Flair graduated private school he was sought after by. . . " Actually he's even worse in Florida. Vince Jr. makes me sick to what he's going to do to the business, he really all he is is a down-in-the-mud capitalist. I went with Rudman third because of "CALL SECURITY, CALL SECURITY" after that Backlund-Muraco fiasco which was later replayed by several newscasts up and down the East coast and went nationally on the NBS news to show "an example" of pro wrestling.

"What Ole Anderson has done to a great promotion and the people within the state of Georgia he should be hung for." -- Jay Steele "Gordon Solie will be forever in first place. Roy Shires is a twerp with a big mouth and I can't stand Wally Karbo's "I'm gonna have you fined and suspended" routine" -- John Jance "Rudman should be liquidated permanently" -- Mark Nulty

BEST BRAWLER

1. BRUISER BRODY (43).....268
 2. Stan Hansen (12).....138
 3. Buzz Sawyer (3).....54
 4. Terry Gordy.....34
 5. Sgt. Slaughter (3).....31
- Honorable Mention: Roddy Piper 29

I went with Brody, Hansen and Gordy for obvious reasons.

"Brody can even make Kimala look good and Big Red passable" -- Mark Nulty

BEST TECHNICAL WRESTLER

1. TIGER MASK (15).....106
 2. Chavo Guerrero (10).....102
 3. Dynamite Kid (9).....54
 4. Paul Orndorff (6).....41
 5. Bob Orton (1).....30
 - Steve Wright (3).....30
- Honorable Mention: Tatsumi Fujinami 24, Riki Chosyu 24

Steve Wright is the only wrestler I've ever seen who compares favorably to Karl Gotch or Billy Robinson in their prime. However Steve really lost it this year so I didn't rate him at all. I went with Tiger Mask and Guerrero 1-2 and had a tough time between Saito, Chosyu, Fujinami, Orton and Adonis for third, finally picking Orton.

"Saito, when he's allowed, is the best" -- Jay Steele "To me, it was Robinson. Verne Gagne used to be great. Dynamite Kid is now great. I'll go with bench presser who never does any power 15 moves in the ring



Dynamite, Flair and Buzz Sawyer" -- Mike Rosen "Dynamite has to be great to do what he does. Orndorff is great to the point of being dull" -- John Jance "It doesn't matter who Flair wrestles, it's almost always a good match. He sells better than anyone. To me the best technician is not only having great moves but making others moves look great. Chosyu has more technical knowledge than anyone I saw last year." -- Mark Nulty

MOST AGILE WRESTLER

1. TIGER MASK (42).....228
 2. Dynamite Kid (12).....108
 3. Chavo Guerrero (1).....63
 4. Dos Caras (4).....49
 5. Jimmy Snuka (2).....41
- Honorable Mention: El Gran Hamada 27
- I went with Tiger Mask, Dos Caras and Hamada in that order.

STRONGEST WRESTLER

1. HULK HOGAN (13).....153
 2. Butch Reed (13).....99
 3. Ken Patera (8).....69
 4. Tony Atlas (5).....68
 5. Andre the Giant (8).....48
- Honorable Mention: Bruiser Brody 43, Niccoli Volkoff 36

This was hard, but I figured Butch Reed pressed bigger guys overhead than anyone else, Hulk Hogan bodyslammed the "sasquash" (but so did El Canek and he's much smaller) and Volkoff did a one-arm neck hanging tree-- all very impressive. Special mention should I say dishonorable mention to Ivan Putski, who was a legit 500 pound

BEST ON INTERVIEWS

1. RODDY PIPER (20).....141
 2. Ric Flair.....(15).....108
 3. Jimmy Hart (7).....76
 4. Bobby Heenan (8).....44
 5. Michael Hayes (5).....42
- Honorable Mention: Jerry Lawler 36,
Don Muraco 29, Nick Bockwinkel 28,
Dusty Rhodes 23, Jesse Ventura 22

To be honest, I can't recall one great Piper interview this year. He was tremendous in years past and gives some good ones, in fact, a great Piper interview may be better than a great Flair interview but. . . I went with Flair followed by Lawler among wrestlers, but No. 1 goes to Jimmy Hart. Hart's comments about prelim losers coming from the Jerry Lawler school of wrestling, asking TV jobbers in mock sincerity "Have you even, at least had a time limit draw?" and his hilarious bringing back of Stan Frazier under a million different identities makes him my favorite.

"Don Muraco may not wrestle anymore but he sure provided many memorable, funny, brilliant moments probably because he was blindingly drunk at the time" -- John Jance
"Bockwinkel's impromptu Memphis interview after losing to Lawler was incredible" -- Kevin Hancer
"Flair does great interviews both as a baby face or heel. He has charisma that few people have. Same with Lawler, but he's more effective as a heel." -- Mark Nulty

MOST CHARISMATIC

1. RIC FLAIR (16).....139
 2. Hulk Hogan (12).....91
 3. Tiger Mask (12).....76
 4. Michael Hayes (9).....75
 5. Jimmy Snuka (8).....53
- Honorable Mention: Roddy Piper 44,
Kerry Von Erich 42, Junkyard Dog 27,
Fabulous Ones 22

To me, charisma is that when a person does almost nothing, he can still get heat. All of the above could be considered in that category although Kerry is charismatic in the arena, he loses it at the mike. The Dog has it at the mike, but loses it once the match starts. The Fabs in a sense have manufactured rather than real charisma, but there is no denying when they walk in the arena the place lights up and Lane is great on interviews. I went with Hogan first because he can do nothing and generate heat, Hayes second because he really doesn't do anything special, but the way he does it draws crowds, Hayes could probably read a phone book and make it a good interview. I went with Tiger Mask third because every match he's in I watch intently to make sure I don't miss a thing.

"I selected Hogan, Flair and Hayes because I feel they had the biggest effect on the box office" -- Mark Nulty
"The effect Jimmy Snuka and Hogan have on a crowd is amazing. I went with Kerry Von Erich third because he walks into a room and gives the girls orgasms" -- John Jance

MOST OVERRATED

1. BOB BACKLUND (27).....153
 2. Dusty Rhodes (8).....75
 3. Tommy Rich (6).....59
 4. Jimmy Snuka (1).....33
 5. Mr. Wrestling II (1).....27
- Honorable Mention: John Studd 24,
Giant Baba 24, Junkyard Dog 22

All of the above certainly qualify. I naturally picked Backlund first for reasons everyone knows. I went with Dog second and Baba third, more because Baba has at least eased out of the spotlight while the other two are still in it.

"The Dog may have appeal and give good interviews, but shows me nothing. Jimmy Snuka is a baby face shows little especially when Muraco got lazy and I never thought much of Kundy" -- John Jance
"Besides his superfly leap, what does Snuka do that impresses you. I think Kevin Von Erich and a few others have better flying body presses. Kerry Von Erich draws lots of 13-year-girls but can't wrestle a lick, his interviews are horrid and he fools up half the moves he attempts and won't work unless he's in front of a big crowd. There are still people who believe Backlund is a good wrestler, which is why he gets third" -- Mark Nulty
"In the AWA must be Dave Schults or Buck Zumhofe, in Georgia Rich and Whatley, New York John Studd, Kimala in Texas and Scott Casey in Southwest" -- Mike Rosen

MOST UNDERRATED

1. DYNAMITE KID (12).....102
 2. Scott McGhee (6).....38
 3. Masa Saito (3).....34
 4. Tito Santana (5).....33
 5. Don Kernodle (3).....30
- Chic Donovan (5).....30
Honorable Mention: Riki Chosyu 27,
Isamu Teranishi 25

I guess there's different types of underrated, underrated by the promotion, such as Kernodle in WWF or Donovan in Georgia, or underrated by fans. Certainly Chosyu, who main events nightly and hasn't been pinned for a fall since late '82 is hardly underrated by the promotion. He's underrated in the U.S. by fans who haven't seen him, as most foreign wrestlers are. I went with Kernodle followed by Teranishi and Eaton.

"Saito in the AWA and anyone who works for Inoki" -- Mike Rosen
"Hennig wrestles main events but hasn't received the publicity he should. Dynamite Kid may be the best-kept secret in wrestling. Eric Embry is an excellent heel, can really get the crowd going" -- Mark Nulty
"Tito Santana, because many people don't take him seriously" -- John Jance
"Bobby Eaton is phenomenal. Nobody takes bumps like he does, except Dynamite Kid. Sooner or later American promoters will wise up and realize booking smaller guys of quality can draw. They should give him the World jr. title and have him tour every circuit in the world" -- Mike Katchell

MOST LIKELY TO MAKE IT BIG IN '84

1. MIKE VON ERICH (7).....49
2. The Cobra (7).....37
3. Tim Horner (1).....28
4. Terry Allen (4).....26
- Tommy Rogers (1).....26

Honorable Mention: Scott McGhee 23

I guess this category created more confusion than results. Obviously Mike Von Erich will be a superstar, whether he is one or not, in the coming years. The Cobra may have blown his chance. Horner is great, but I don't know if he'll be given his deserved break this year. Allen will be a star of the future. Rogers I'm sure with his brothers beside him will do well this year, but to be honest, can someone tell me why everyone thinks so much of little Buzz. He can dropkick and he has a good physique, but what makes him anything special?

"Angelo Mosca Jr. because of the name" -- Norm Dooley "Kevin Wacholz probably too soon" -- Mike Rosen "Curt Hennig is around the corner from superstardom" -- Jay Steele "Brad Rheingans because Gagne is about to start pushing him if he's healthy" -- Kevin Hancer "Mike Von Erich as surely as death and taxes. Tim Horner as far as talent" -- Larry Lovell

BEST WRESTLING CIRCUIT

1. Mid Atlantic (24).....187
2. New Japan (24).....168
3. World Class Dallas (11).....136
4. WWF (6).....63
5. Memphis (4).....49

First place to me was between the only two outstanding circuits I can find--New Japan and Mid Atlantic. Analyzing, I would say overall the talent is about equal, both groups have so many good wrestlers that you overlook a few. New Japan has a better variety, because they change the foreigners each month. The quality of the main events from both groups is generally excellent. As for faults, Mid Atlantic has the most unimaginative match-making in the country and the skits are bad, the angles very average and they sometimes come across well only because they have exceptional performers in them. New Japan has a variation of the same main event five of seven nights, even the excellent Fujinami vs Chosyu series began boring me and there are far too many inconclusive endings which are never resolved. I went with New Japan only because of the jr. heavy division which makes them multi-dimensional. Third place was between World Class and Memphis. I believe World Class has better main eventers, but Memphis cards give you 7-10 matches, several of them tags, Battle Royals, etc. on a night of consistent action for \$6 ringside. The amount you get per dollar spent makes me pick them third, just by a hair.

"Mid Atlantic is tops, starting with

Flair and work your way down the list" -- Larry Lovell "Mid Atlantic has the best collection of wrestlers in the world--Flair, Steamboat, Piper, Youngblood, Valentine, Funk, Slater, Orton, Briscos etc. and also do the best job promoting their feuds" -- Mark Nulty "I've never seen a circuit as entertaining as World Class, certainly nowhere do the fans seem like they're having any more fun" -- Mike Katchell "The skill level and action of New Japan makes it superior by far to anything else" -- Dave Korner

BEST TV SHOW

1. NEW JAPAN (21).....135
2. World Class (10).....132
3. Mid South (14).....122
4. Memphis (7).....53
5. WWF (3).....30

As a television show, World Class is so slickly produces, has some of the funniest features with excellent characters like The Freebirds, Von Erichs, Garvin, Adams and the girls and does so much to project an aura of stardom and entertainment around its shows that I think it's the best. Memphis has wackier entertainment, but the studio matches can't compare with the action-filled arena main events on World Class. I went with New Japan third because it has the best matches, although the World Class matches that don't have nearly the same agree of skill level still are just as entertaining. I'm sure if I understood Japanese I'd enjoy NJWA the most. Mid South was great early in the year because of the clever angles but it tailed off at the end because of the poor talent. Portland has a good atmosphere add strong announcing as does Calgary but neither group is deep in talent so you generally get a very good main event and a dull remainder of the show. PWF Japan is great when Terry Funk is in action against Brody & Hansen, in fact the best. The rest of the time it's nothing spectacular.

"Memphis is tops, it's totally kinky, followed by World Class because of the great main events they televise and Mid South, because it's well run" -- John Jance "Nobody puts more angles faster and better than Memphis and I really enjoy the highlights set to music. From a production standpoint, nothing is better than World Class. The show is so classy everyone perceives everything they do as first rate, which it isn't. Portland is also a lot of fun to watch because I like good announcing, good interviews and best-of-three fall main events" -- Mark Nulty "Nobody shocks you out of your socks better than Bill Watts. Memphis is great mindless stuff. Really, after watching the good Japan matches I find both shows far and away the best. I can hardly watch American wrestling I've gotten so spoiled. Maybe that's why I like Memphis so much now" -- Mike Katchell

C A T E G O R Y B A W A R D S

These awards are based on the number of first place votes received. In the match of the year category I tabulated votes in both "best match you saw" and "match you would most have liked to have seen" and compiled them in one category, and as is our annual tradition, picking the top two as co-matches of the year

MATCH OF THE YEAR

1. RICKY STEAMBOAT-JAY YOUNGBLOOD vs. SGT. SLAUGHTER-DON KERNODLE cage match 3-12 Greensboro.....19
2. RIC FLAIR vs. HARLEY RACE 11-24 Greensboro cage match.....17
3. TIGER MASK vs. DYNAMITE KID 4-23 Tokyo.....13
4. ANTONIO INOKI vs. HULK HOGAN 6-2 Tokyo.....9
5. TERRY FUNK'S RETIREMENT MATCH w/ DORY FUNK vs. STAN HANSEN & TERRY GORDY 8-31 Tokyo.....8

Honorable Mention: Von Erichs vs. Freebirds 7-4 Ft. Worth 7; Flair vs. Kerry Von Erich 12-25-82 Dallas 6;; Muraco vs. Snuka 7-23 Landover 6; Kerry Von Erich vs. Michael Hayes cage match 11-24 Dallas 5; Roddy Piper vs. Greg Valentine dog collar match 11-24 Greensboro 5

I picked the Steamboat-Youngblood vs Slaughter-Kernodle bout as the one I most wanted to see. The best match, not only because it was a fantastic half hour of action but becomes of its long-term repercussions I saw was Flair vs. Kerry Von Erich from Christmas '82 in Dallas

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

1. ROAD WARRIORS.....18
2. Billy Jack.....17
3. Tonga Kid.....5
- Angelo Mosca Jr.....5

Even though Billy is bigger, stronger and a better wrestler than the Warriors, I picked the Warriors because of agressiveness in 90 second TV matches and overall impact. "Warriors may not be great in the ring but they could be the best drawing tag team ever" -- Mark Nulty

HARDEST WORKER

1. DYNAMITE KID.....25
2. Ric Flair.....15
3. Tiger Mask.....6

Anyone who has seen Dynamite Kid on a regular basis knows why I picked him first.

"Ric Flair, nobody comes close to all-around workrate, schedule, interviews feud build-up and matches" -- John Jance "I've never seen Flair have an off night despite the schedule he keeps" -- Mark Nulty

BIGGEST SHOCK OF THE YEAR

1. FLAIR LOSING NWA BELT TO RACE..15
 2. Tiger Mask's retirement.....13
 3. Inoki-Hogan result and the ensuing exposure and problems from it...9
- Honorable mention: Return of Blackjack Lanza 5, Butch Reed turning heel 5
- Certainly the biggest shock of '83 occured on 12-26 at the Garden, but that was too late for our poll. I went with Tiger Mask's retirement and the fact he's stayed with it this

long. "The actual exposure of Inoki-gate to the press is a shock. That actual occurence isn't" -- Walt Wolansky "Nobody was more shocked than Inoki when Hogan won the IWGP tournament" -- Mark Nulty

MOST DISGUSTING PROMOTIONAL STUNT

1. EDDIE GILBERT'S "NECK INJURY"...23
2. Ole Anderson advertising Race and assorted other blunders.....13
3. Blanchard's undisputed World's title tourney.....5

Honestly, I wasn't offended by the Gilbert thing like everyone else appeared to have been. Wrestlers getting "injured" to vacation or tour Japan has been around for 25 years. I was offended by several things Ole Anderson did, the worst of which was advertising a World champion who wasn't booked and not offering refunds. "Everytl in Florida, especially Kevin Sullivan" -- John Jance "I could list a page on Ole, but the worst was when Larry Zbyszko bought the National belt and got to keep it for six weeks" -- Jay Steele "None of Ole's harmless foolishness could be as offensive as the "re-injury" of Gilbert. A weepy Backlund and wimpy Gilbert add up to a sorry scenario" -- Larry Lovell "Advertising a Battle Royal and not having one, advertising a World champ and not having one, and not offering refunds. Who was this?" -- Mark Nulty "Joe Blanchard got everything he deserved for crowning the undisputed World's heavyweight champion. Way to go Joe!" -- Mike Rosen

BEST ANNOUNCER

1. GORDON SOLIE26
 2. Bill Watts.....15
 3. Lance Russell.....10
- Honorable Mention: Don Koss, Portland 5; Bill Mercer, Dallas 5

If one of the 26 who voted for Gordon Solie could let me know why, I'd appreciate it. I went with Lance Russell because of how he interacts with Jimmy Hart, Jimmy Cornette and the rest of the heels. I would have voted for Watts but his build-up of Niccoli Volkoff (not building up Nic, but the manner which he did so) turned my stomach. Don Koss is excellent on play-by-play but weak on interviews, Gene Okerlund is the opposite.

"Lance Russell is a perfect foil" -- John Jance "Are there any good ones? Solie used to be good but he's gone so far beyond objectivity, forget it. Gorilla Monsoon has interesting things to say when he talks about a stinker of an MSG card being all mair events, no way. Gene Okerlund is funny but doesn't know wrestling. Rod Trongu isn't funny and also doesn't know wrestling. Watts is the best play-by-play man" -- Mike Rosen "Don Koss knows wrestling, conveys information the promotion wants to get across, he's articulate, professional and gives the impression he enjoys what he's doing" -- Mark Nulty

MANAGER OF THE YEAR

1. JIMMY HART.....34
 2. Lou Albano.....17
 3. Bobby Heenan.....8
- Honorable Mention: J.J. Dillon 6,
Grand Wizard 5

Hart is the most creative and given free reign making him most effective. Heenan is such a good contrast to Bockwinkel on interviews that I'd call them the best duo. Albano, when he's on a roll is pretty good also. Dillon would be great, but he's in Florida.

BEST THREE MAN TEAM

1. FREEBIRDS.....45
2. Chosyu-Saito-Khan.....24
3. Von Erichs.....11

I guess you can look at this one two ways, but seeing and enjoying Freebirds vs. Von Erichs all year makes me realize that the Chosyu-Saito-Khan trio is better than both the Freebirds and Von Erichs combined. My own opinion is that the Von Erichs are better than the Freebirds because they have better teamwork and are more talented individually and are minus the weak link member the Freebirds have. As for impact, there is no doubt who is best there. I still went with the Japanese team.

"The Von Erichs are all of good quality. Can't pick Freebirds because Roberts is a dud and Hayes not that great as a wrestler" -- John Jance

"Certainly the AWA's Three Sheiks could qualify, but don't. The three Samoans, forget it although Samala is good. I'll go with the Von Erichs over Freebirds." -- Mike Rosen

COMPLETE LISTING OF WINNERS

Wrestler of the Year

- 1980 - Harley Race
1981 - Ric Flair
1982 - Ric Flair
1983 - Ric Flair

Best Baby Face

- 1980 - Dusty Rhodes
1981 - Tommy Rich
1982 - Hulk Hogan
1983 - Hulk Hogan

Best Heel

- 1980 - Larry Zbyszko
1981 - Don Muraco
1982 - Buzz Sawyer
1983 - Michael Hayes

Best Feud

- 1980 - Sammartino vs Zbyszko
1981 - Andre vs Khan
1982 - DiBiase vs Dog
1983 - Freebirds vs Von Erichs

Best Tag Team

- 1980 - Gordy & Roberts
1981 - Gordy & Snuka
1982 - Anderson & Hansen
1983 - Steamboat & Youngblood

Most Improved

- 1980 - Larry Zbyszko
1981 - Adrian Adonis
1982 - Jim Duggan
1983 - Curt Hennig

BEST FINISHING MOVE

- 1981 - Snuka's superfly splash
1982 - Super D's superplex
1983 - Snuka's superfly splash

Most Impressive

- 1980 - Ken Patera
1981 - Don Muraco
1982 - Tiger Mask
1983 - Dynamite Kid

Most Washed up

- 1980 - Baron Scicluna
1981 - Peter Maivia
1982 - Superstar Billy Graham
1983 - Chief Jay Strongbow

Most Obnoxious

- 1981 - Gene LeBelle
1982 - David Crockett
1983 - Vince McMahon Jr.

Best Brawler

- 1980 - Bruiser Brody
1981 - Bruiser Brody
1982 - Bruiser Brody
1983 - Bruiser Brody

Best Technical Wrestler

- 1980 - Bob Backlund
1981 - Ted DiBiase
1982 - Tiger Mask
1983 - Tiger Mask

Most Agile

- 1981 - Jimmy Snuka
1982 - Tiger Mask
1983 - Tiger Mask

Strongest

- 1981 - Tony Atlas
1982 - Ken Patera
1983 - Hulk Hogan

Best Interview

- 1981 - Roddy Piper/Lou Albano (tie)
1982 - Roddy Piper
1983 - Roddy Piper

Most Charismatic

- 1980 - Ric Flair
1981 - Michael Hayes
1982 - Dusty Rhodes/Ric Flair (tie)
1983 - Ric Flair

Most Overrated

- 1980 - Mr. Wrestling II
1981 - Pedro Morales
1982 - Pedro Morales
1983 - Bob Backlund

Most Underrated

- 1980 - Hossein Arab (Iron Sheik)
1981 - Buzz Sawyer
1982 - Adrian Adonis
1983 - Dynamite Kid

Matches of the Year

- 1980 - Sammartino vs. Zbyszko cage
Backlund vs. Patera MSG
1981 - Rhodes vs. Flair Kansas City
Patterson vs. Slaughter MSG
1982 - Flair vs. Backlund Atlanta
Tiger Mask vs Dynamite Kid Tokyo
1983 - Slaughter/Kernodle vs.
Steamboat/Youngblood Greensboro
Flair vs. Race Greensboro

Rookie of the Year

- 1980 - Barry Windham
1981 - Brad Armstrong/Brad Rheingans (tie)
1982 - Steve Williams
1983 - Road Warriors

Biggest Shock

- 1981 - Rich wins NWA title
- 1982 - Wanz wins AWA title
- 1983 - Race beats Flair for NWA belt

Best Announcer

- 1981 - Gordon Solie
- 1982 - Gordon Solie
- 1983 - Gordon Solie

Most Disgusting Promotional tactic

- 1981 - Usage of The Monster in L.A.
 - 1982 - Backlund retaining WWF crown
 - 1983 - Gilbert's pretend neck injury
- *****

CORRESPONDENTS CORNER

TERRIBLE WWF TAPES

I would like to tell you about the terrible way the WWF TV tapings are being run. Gorilla Monsoon is responsible for getting the various wrestlers into the ring. One thing viewers don't realize is sometimes we, the audience, have to wait for several minutes because there is only one wrestler in the ring. Also, sometimes the wrong wrestler enters the ring. They then stop the match in the middle, and Monsoon chases the wrong guy out and the right one comes in. Most of the time it's just a TV scribb.

At the 12/7 Hamburg TV tapings (things are obviously different in Allentown as title have changed hands there, something that never happens in Hamburg) I was enjoying a match between Eddie Gilbert & Tony Garea vs. Rene Goulet & Mike Sharpe. The match was action-packed (hard to believe with Garea and Goulet but never the less. . .) when after 15 minutes Gorilla Monsoon walks out to the ring and has the nerve to yell to Garea, "Tony, I want a double DQ!"

In 15:49 the match was ruled a double DQ. All the wrestlers quickly ran in the ring and started fighting and they were all dq'd.

Where was the professionalism? Answer--There was none. This was the sloppiest thing I've ever seen. By the way, that was a "dark match," but not the main event dark match. Vince Jr. should either get Monsoon on the ball or get a new man.

Mike Pochuski
Mohnton, Pennsylvania

ENJOYED COMMENTS ON WARRIORS

I enjoyed your comments on the Road Warriors. It has occurred to me that they always wrestle total wimps on TV. I figured there was a good reason. Just the same, I'll stick with rating them as the top tag team based by reaction of the promotion. Still, a Road Warrior vs. Brody-Hansen would be no contest as far as brawlability goes.

I enjoyed your coverage on Starcade '83 especially. I'd be very surprised to see a similar approach tried too many other places. The AWA doesn't need it.

As you noted, World Class Wrestling is now broadcast in the Twin Cities. The show seems to be just a few weeks behind real time. The 11/26 show we saw had the Garvin-Roberts vs. Adams-Mantell tag match where Sunshine rips off Precious' jacket. Great Stuff. Sunshine's "press conference" a couple of weeks before that was unbelievable!

Our local ABC affiliate had a five part series on pro wrestling. Although their tongues are firmly planted in cheek, the coverage is always good. This station also gives coverage to every local card. I think their commitment to covering wrestling will continue as long as their seems to be public interest.

Mike Rosen
St. Louis Park, Minnesota

SHOCK OF SHOCKS

I know it's incredible! Give Vince McMahon credit. He can put on a lousy card and because it's during Christmas vacation it will sell out. Sure enough the result was a total shock. Backlund gave up to the camel clutch.

This has to be the biggest shock of the year. There was no indication this would happen despite a very contrived and poorly acted (by Backlund) altercation on TV the previous weekend.

John Jance
Flushing, New York

WANTS CERTAIN TAPES

I'm looking for videos of:

- 1) "Mad Bull" with Alex Karras
- 2) "Lie Detector" where Cyclone Negro flunked the test
- 3) The episode of The Monkees with Nick Bockwinkel

Allan Gale
21941 Bern
Oak Park, Michigan 48237

DON'T KNOCK RACE

I read that a lot of fans are knocking Baron Von Raschke. Jim isn't the top line wrestler of old, but never fails to deliver a good show...at least one that pleases the typical fans. His strutting and posturing always brings a good audience response, especially from college kids.

Why do fans keep knocking Harley Race? Since obtaining the NWA title for the seventh time, he's lost weight and seems determined to be a quality representative of the title. Now he's lost to Ric Flair and a lot of people will be happy.

Still, I have to say that I enjoy Race's interviews and enjoy watching him wrestle. He's skilled, experienced and tough. So is Flair. Some of his matches in Japan were outstanding. I still believe Race is a classy competitor.

Kevin Hancer
Edina, Minnesota

SHOULDN'T USE SOME TERMS

I think you should use some discretion about some of the words you use in your bulletin (marks, baby face, heels). Word spreads fast in this business. Before you know it everybody will be smart about the business.

Roy Shire was heated up because nobody would buy him out (Nov. 83). He felt it he couldn't make money in the business then nobody else should. He gave 40 years to the business, but what about new wrestlers who want to spend their next 40 years in the business. When you have people like that it can ruin the sport.

Neil Drummond
Vancouver, British Columbia

AGREE WITH COMMENTS ON SHIRES

I agree basically with the comments you made about the Roy Shire article (Nov. 83). Most fans know the endings of matches are pre-determined. Many of them don't really care.

Some of the statements in the article were probably news to many news, especially the part about the use of razor blades and the fact that the blood is real.

The majority of fans still believe the blood is fake. If you told them a wrestler would actually cut himself with a blade, many wouldn't believe it and probably laugh in your face.

I recently overheard two fans talking and one of them told the other exactly how wrestlers bleed. The guy thought his friend was joking. The man assured him he was telling the truth, but he still didn't believe it.

I wasn't as upset about the Shire article as many people seemed to be. Since most fans already knew most of what was stated, why get upset about it?

Everything Mark Nulty said in his commentary was true. The reason the Los Angeles Times didn't offer an opposing viewpoint was fairly obvious.

Other promoters (McMahon, Gagne) could not admit the truth about wrestling. They would either have to make no comment or lie by saying the finishes aren't pre-determined. By making no comment, the implication would be Shire was correct.

If they were to lie, wasn't that one of the complaints Mark had about Shire?

I disagreed with your comments about both Jacques Rougeau and Roger Smith (Assassin, A-Team Memphis). You claimed Rougeau is an excellent wrestler and stated Smith is halfway decent. During his matches, Smith uses vertical suplexes, belly-to-belly suplexes, double arm suplexes, power slams, clotheslines, sling-shots over the top rope from a standing position and an incredible flying elbow drop in which he bounces off the ropes and leaps over his opponent landing on the opposite side of the mat. Most wrestlers of average

weight simply land on the side closest to them. Considering Smith's size, it makes the move even more spectacular. Smith's only drawback is his weight. You never seem to hold that against Crusher Blackwell though.

Rougeau is good and I really liked him as a villain. He isn't as good as you say, however. Granted, his dropkick off the turnbuckle is fantastic, but he has little else in the way of talent. Smith is a much better wrestler and even more impressive than Ray Hernandez (Assassin #2 in Mid Atlantic). Roger is obviously better than Joe Hamilton.

I agreed with your comments about the Road Warriors in the last issue. I realize they project a great image on TV, but they aren't nearly as impressive when you see them live. I've seen them five or six times and none of their bouts have been very good. Any match of theirs' which goes more than ten minutes is usually boring because they spend 60 to 70 percent of the time on the mat in rest holds.

Since most people only see them on TV and not in arenas, I can see how they would be impressed. I really don't like them as much as everyone else does. In fact, I don't like them at all.

Norm Dooley
New Albany, Indiana

VINCE IS CREATING A MONSTER

It's been ten years possibly since attendance in Pittsburgh was as bad as the 12/16 card. The problem is lack of imagination in the matchmaking plus a champion that everyone knows several wrestlers are better than.

Vince plays everyone as fools. They are going too far in expansion with more than two cards a night. The wrestlers already have the Georgia disease (they travel and barnstorm so much they leave their best action on the bus and go through the motions in the ring). Pittsburgh fans don't want to sell out \$6-8 to see poor matchmaking, poor matches and a poor champion. When they announced the 1/20 line-up, a situation where fans normally show plenty of emotion, the crowd sat and did nothing. Even Sgt. Slaughter vs. Jimmy Snuka only drew a whimper.

The recent Muraco-Albano vs. Snuka-Skoaland match was beyond bad. Ivan Putski vs. Sgt. Slaughter was as bad as you would expect. Fans are realizing that Ivan, who was really big in this blue-collar town, can't wrestle.

Vince Sr. created a monster. A son who is becoming the Hitler of wrestling. If I hear about the WWF calendar or Victory Magazine I'll scream.

The Georgia shows in Altoona have been selling out. The WWF in Altoona is basically empty.

Jay Steele
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

ENJOYED NULTY ARTICLE

Enjoyed the January bulletin as it was one of the more provocative ones to date. I enjoyed your editorial and also the Mark Nulty commentary. Apparently Mr. Nulty and myself share a common disdain of media hype.

It seems the slick packaging and media hype characterizing the World Class promotion has been a triumph of style over content. This group will have its work cut out when the Freebirds leave and the catfights subside.

It was amusing to hear Ft. Worth commentator Mark Lowrance refer to Mike Von Erich's pro debut as "the beginning of a legend." I'm wondering if a pipeline exists between the offices of Fritz Von Erich and Tex Schramm of the Dallas Cowboys. Perhaps World Class Wrestling may soon be referred to as America's wrestling promotion.

The plaudits given World Class were earlier given to Bill Watts of Mid South this year. The angles he comes up with are good. But if you're booking a bunch of stiffs, what good are they?

Jerry Jarrett's Memphis group works angles and twists as well as Watts does, without the seriousness Watts intones when hyping a guy like Junkyard Dog. It's easy to appreciate the escapist fun of Memphis when comparing it to the pretentiousness of Mid South and World Class.

It was refreshing to see Jim Crockett cited for the success of Starcade '83, rather than what some consider his lack of innovation. Mid Atlantic promotions have consistently booked the finest stable of talent since 1974 when Crockett began revamping the promotion. The quality of the arena shows is generally apparent.

While the "never ending" feuds here can become tiresome, the quality of the matches themselves and the workrate of the participants has to be admired. Some of the more memorable examples are Flair vs. Steamboat and Steamboat & Youngblood vs. the Briscos series.

The lull you described in Mid Atlantic is apparent now. Mosca can't draw so the only promising feud looked like Steamboat & Youngblood vs. Slater & Orton, and now that's not going to happen either. Tommy Rich may develop a following if he stays but "Wildfire" is practically extinguished.

Larry Lovell
Hillsville, Virginia

STARCADE LIVED UP TO ITS BILLING

I would like to add two more categories to you poll, tag team match of the year and wrestling card of the year. For me, both choices are clear.

Because Starcade '83 went over satellite, ten of us wrestling fans stuffed with turkey went to a Detroit bar that had a dish on the roof. All of us agreed that the World's tag team title match between Jack & Jerry Brisco vs. Ricky Steamboat & Jay Youngblood was exceptional. The Briscos combined roughhouse tactics and excellent wrestling. Steamboat & Youngblood used high flying

moves, counter holds and their own brand of martial arts. When Steamboat lifted Youngblood like a human barbell and threw him on Jerry Brisco it was an excellent finish. Even some of the non-fans at the bar were cheering.

My choice of card of the year is obvious. The Greensboro Thanksgiving Starcade '83 was a rewarding experience from the pre-match hype through the preliminary matches to the main event.

Roddy Piper and Greg Valentine put on the best and wildest chain match brawl that I have ever seen.

While many cage matches promise a lot more than they deliver, the match between Ric Flair and Harley Race showed the considerable ability of both wrestlers. Race countered the figure four, Flair used all sorts of suplexes and cradles and flying stomps.

This all-out action card should be a model for promoters. Excellent cards of this caliber need not ruin attendance. Check out the aftermath of the Philadelphia and Dallas supercards.

While many fans knock Harley Race, I respect him for the many fine bouts that he's a part of.

Martin Slobin
Royal Oak, Michigan

DIDN'T LIKE COMMENT ON R&R EXPRESS

I take offense about the Rock'n' Roll Express looking like clowns comment in your last issue. If you pick up any major rock & roll magazine such as "Circus," "Creem" or "Hit Parader" you'll see many top ten recording artists like "Quiet Riot" or "Van Halen" dressed in the same fashion. I feel guys like the Express are bringing a more modern fashion to the sport.

Lloyd Lee, Hollywood

PERHAPS TITLE CHANGE WAS LAST MINUTE

Somehow I think the title change was a last-minute decision. Before Billy Graham won the belt, his bouts (which later would be announced as title bouts) for future cards were given publicity. Upcoming cards had given little mention of Iron Sheik. I'm sure you were as surprised as nearly everyone else, including myself, about the title change.

I agree that Davey Boy Smith is very impressive. The Cobra left much to be desired. Really, he and any new masked wrestler in New Japan will be compared to Tiger Mask, and unfavorable for at least another year.

Walt Wolansky
Eddystone, Pennsylvania

DOESN'T LIKE TIGER MASK

I saw one of Tiger Mask's matches and wasn't that impressed. I don't like all that acrobatic stuff.

I found it difficult to choose baby faces. I expect it in the AWA where daddy doesn't want anyone to outclass Reggie. What happened to my youth when we had Rocca, Gagne, O'Connor, Snyder, Carpentier and McClarity?

Ron Dobratz
Roscoe, Illinois

WWF

WWF HC - Iron Sheik

Intercontinental HC - Don Muraco

WWF TTC - Tony Atlas & Rocky Johnson

We're starting off here because this is where the news is. More has happened concerning the WWF in the past two weeks than in the two years previous to Christmas.

Iron Sheik, as everyone knows by now, won the WWF title from Bob Backlund when Arnold Skoaland, Backlund's manager, tossed in the towel at 11:50 on 12/26 at Madison Square Garden.

The match itself was wrestled to show Sheik totally dominating Bob who entered with a "severely injured shoulder or neck." The injury stemmed from an Iranian club incident when Bob began twirling Sheik's clubs, and Sheik hit him from behind in the neck on the 12/6 Allentown tapings third hour, shown the Saturday before the MSG match. Bob was supposed to fall with the club hitting his neck. Clumsy Bob, however fell, realizing he screwed up, picked up a club, and hit himself in the head with it. I'm told it was the worst skit even Bob has ever been involved in. The one thing I noticed, which has been brought up by many, is that for a sold out Garden (show drew 24,500 including Felt Forum closed circuit), the crowd reaction from the intro throughout the bout and the finale was dead. No heat whatsoever.

I'm told as far as Sheik as champion, despite his references to the Ayatollah, his flag waving and rubbing the win in everyone's face, he isn't getting nearly the heat villains like Don Muraco and Sgt. Slaughter got some months earlier. Even though the Sheik, who is nearly 44, is well past his prime, his choice as interim champion was the best one available. Sgt. Slaughter is about to turn baby face, and the fact an Iranian holds the WWF belt will probably be a major excuse for the change.

Muraco can stimulate more heat, but he's been around for so long, already held the I.C. title (which he will likely lose 1/23 to Tito Santana at the Garden) and unbelievable as it sounds, may also change sides of the fence. If he doesn't, he'll be back in Hawaii for some Rest and recuperation by February. In addition, on a recent TV taping, Lou Albano slapped Mike Sharpe, who is currently in Japan. For the first time in modern history, it's hard to figure exactly what will happen next in this area.

Almost equal to the news of Backlund's loss, comes the news of the new wrestlers who have appeared in WWF rings. Of course the biggest coup was the signing of Hulk Hogan away from the AWA. McMahon undoubtedly made Hogan an excellent financial proposition, but Gagne actually got together enough capital to top it, which is

The new manager --

RODDY
PIPER



why the AWA expected Hogan to return from his Japanese tour in their rings. The fact that Vince McMahon Sr. was in Japan at the same time as Hogan makes you realize what happened next. It is rumored one of Hogan's demands was the WWF title belt. I do know for a fact another of his demands was that he could pick a wrestler to bring with him to work with--David Schults. The AWA's two other major losses to the WWF raids, Rick Martel and Gene Okerlund may or may not have been additional demands. Actually, in Martel's case I'm pretty sure it wasn't as we reported last month Martel was to leave the AWA anyway.

Also while in Japan, the elder McMahon finalized the deal with Adrian Adonis, and apparently was so impressed with the Adonis & Dick Murdoch team, that the McMahon's and Murdoch have buried the hatchet a little bit, as the two are teaming together on the WWF tapings in St. Louis and are due for the late January Pennsylvania tapes. The Adonis & Murdoch duo was managed by Mad Dog Managoff, who may be the son of former wrestler Bobby Managoff.

The other newcomer is Roddy Piper, who seems to be in more of a managerial capacity rather than a wrestler. Piper is managing Schults and Paul Orndorff. While Piper will make a great manager, I'd like to see him in the ring semi-regularly. He's better than most of the WWF wrestlers and as far as generating heat and crowds, he's one of the best heels I've ever seen.

Gene Okerlund, who is the best "straight man" interviewer in the

Paul Orndorff and Brian Blair



business, has taken over for Pat Patterson as Vince Jr.'s TV sidekick. With Okerlund, the WWF TV shows will be doing more interviews before the crowds and Okerlund is also replacing McMahon on the local pro-mo's. He will certainly work well with the likes of Piper, Adonis, Murdoch, Schults and Hogan. With the signing of the AWA talent and its announcer, one would expect McMahon and company to be running Minneapolis and environs shows very soon.

As mentioned, the WWF is now in St. Louis. Whether or not McMahon actually bought out Gagne and Geigel as has been reported elsewhere is debateable noticing the attack by McMahon on Gagne's troops, plus the fact Gagne & Geigel have gotten a new TV outlet in St. Louis and have more shows booked. WWF taped at the Chase Hotel charging \$5 (From Muchnick through Geigel and Matysik, traditionally TV tapings in St. Louis have been free) admission for the three hours of tapes, plus a non-televised "dark match" on 12/28 and drew an overflow crowd of 1100 and turned away several hundred more. Besides the newcomers (Hogan, Schults, Martel, Okerlund, Adonis, Murdoch) already mentioned, they had Mil Mascaras, John Studd and Ivan Putski at the tapings along with Dennis Stamp doing jobs. The next taping is set for 1/16 with Tony Atlas vs. Murdoch as the dark match, and WWF debuts at Kiel Auditorium 2/10 with a 20 man Battle Royal, Hulk Hogan vs. The Superstar and Jimmy Snuka vs. Mr. Fuji.

Actually KPLR-TV in St. Louis initiated the contact with the WWF. The "Wrestling at the Chase" program that Bob Geigel was running was doing very poorly in the ratings, and the station, which owns the broadcast, contacted both Larry Matysik (whose promotion appears to be defunct) and Titan Sports about replacing Geigel's shows with somebody else.

Actually crowds in December were markedly down throughout the WWF. 12/11 Cincinnati with Muraco vs Snuka drew 1200; Dayton that same tour did even worse; 12/12 Pittsburgh with Backlund vs Superstar did 7000, while 12/25 was down to 5992 for Backlund vs Superstar and Muraco-Albano vs Snuka-Arnold Skoaland. Pittsburgh had been averaging 13,000 per show. Backlund was the recipient of more and more boos at many of the more wild arenas. With McMahon expanding into new territory, it was obvious Backlund had to go. Actually Bob's bouts with both Sheik and Superstar were the worst drawing title series events in several years.

The WWF's first Detroit show on 12/30 headlined by Backlund vs Slaughter drew 2300. They are coming back with Hogan and will undoubtedly do much better.

The 1/23 MSG show has Iron Sheik vs Backlund, who will still be suffering from his neck injury and probably not regain the title. Even if he does, the interest the title change sparked will keep crowds up for a while. San vs Muraco, Atlas-Johnson vs Samoans, Orndorff vs Bellomo, etc. round it out. I'm told MSG is also booked 2/20 which would be Backlund six-year anniversary, so I'll assume he's to get a second re-match. Slaughter, who should be a full-fledged baby face by the following MSG show in late March, will probably get into a series of bouts followed by Hogan for an early summer/late spring Shea Stadium show and the title change. With Hogan as champ, turn Andre the Giant into a villain, and Waalaa--Shea Stadium won't be big enough to hold this promotion. Let's see how close this scenario comes.

Backlund & Hogan teamed up several times on the tapings 1/2 and 1/3, including Hulk's surprise return on the first hour in a bout between Bob and a Samoan. Bob overacted his shoulder/neck injury through the third hour on both shows, making it an "out" for the next month at least.

Boston and Capital Centre and Los Angeles all have Battle Royal this next month. I'm told WWF will draw the first sellout at the Olympic Auditorium on 1/28 in several years. By the way, the Los Angeles Sports Arena, where WWF had been running the past year, is trying to bring in wrestling on its own. The directors say they're negotiating with "a group out of Minneapolis." Stay out of this one Verne, worry about your home!

The Battle Royals may not go through the WWF rubber-stamp promotion as in the past. On 12/17 in Baltimore, with the winner of the royal set to wrestle Backlund for the title, Tony Atlas won the royal. Backlund and Atlas wrestled 16 minutes and I was told it was worse than you would think, which is medically impossible if both of their hearts were beating. Anyway, Bob head-butted Tony in the groin accidentally on an attempted leap-frog, Tony was unable to continue but Bob refused to accept the win.

In pro-mo's in Boston, Muraco wished Backlund the best of luck against Sheik and hurled several insults at the Iran while in Washington, D.C. Slaughter wished President Reagan and Nancy a Merry Christmas and vowed if he meets Sheik, Sheik will be blowing bubbles.

I almost forget an impressive newcomer, Jose Luis Rivera who used to wrestle as Mac Rivera. I'm told he looks pretty good. The Moondogs may be on the way. WWF plans to run four shows per night in the coming months, which is spreading things rather thin, but with this talent pool, they'll get away with it.

Buddy Rogers slipped in the MSG dressing room 11/21 which is why he cancelled his series of matches as Jimmy Snuka's partner, causing old Arnie Skoaland to sub against Muraco and Albano. Rogers has been fired and has sued McMahon.

There's more. Rumor has it WWF talking with Spyros Arion in Greece to head up operations in Australia. McMahon Sr., while in Japan, sold an arena tape to one of the networks for \$20,000 and talked with Hisashi Shinma, the deposed brains behind the NJWA success story in Japan, about promoting in the Orient. Apparently if all goes well in this venture, Shinma has told McMahon he can lure Satoru Sayama (the original Tiger Mask) out of retirement.

WWF has cancelled further shows in San Diego. 12/4 drew only 1800 and the action there was poor because they wrestle in a boxing ring, thus the wrestlers can't take any real falls. 1/28 Los Angeles Battle Royal which has John Tolos, Pat Patterson, Santana, Atlas, Sharpe, Afa & Sika, Sheik, Slaughter, Andre and Hogan was to be the last Calif. card if crowds don't pick up, but they certainly will. Baltimore runs 1/28 also with Backlund vs Orndorff, Snuka vs Muraco, Superstar vs Johnson. It'll be interesting to see how well Backlund vs. Orndorff draws.

PACIFIC WRESTLING FEDERATION

International HC - Jumbo Tsuruta
Pacific Federation HC - Stan Hansen
United National HC - Ted DiBiase
International jr. HC - Chavo Guerrero
International TTC - Giant Baba & Jumbo Tsuruta

As expected, Stan Hansen & Bruiser Brody swept through the tag team tournament downing Jumbo Tsuruta & Genichiro Tenryu on the 12/12 Tokyo final before a sellout 13,000. Going into the final night, Hansen & Brody has 10 points, Dory Funk & Giant Baba had 10 and Tenryu & Tsuruta had 11. The tourney awards one point for a draw and two for a win, so you can figure the possibilities as Dory & Baba also met Tiger Jeet Singh & Umanosuke Ueda that night. That match was a double count out, which meant Tenryu & Tsuruta just needed a draw to win the tourney, which they didn't get. Hansen & Brody didn't lose but lost via DQ to Dory & Baba on 12/10 putting them in a must-win predicament the last night.

After Hansen & Brody's 12 points, Dory & Baba and Tsuruta & Tenryu tied for second with 11 (the two had gone to a 45 minute draw 11/29 Sapporo); Tiger Jeet Singh & Umanosuke Ueda, who also didn't lose a match clear cut (nor did Dory & Baba) finished with six, losing several bouts via DQ including 12/11 against Brody & Hansen. Singh & Ueda tied with Mil Mascaras & Dos Caras who also had six points in fourth place. Mil & Dos beat Singh & Ueda via DQ

mf

but lost via pin to the three teams finishing ahead of them. Ron Fuller & Barry Windham followed with four points, Ashura Hara & Mighty Inoue with two and Goro Tsurumi & The Mongolian (Gene Lewis) with zilch.

This group drew sellouts just about every night of the tag tourney with Terry Funk on hand to manage his brother and Baba. Terry did get involved in the 12/10 bout, naturally with Brody & Hansen as foes. After Stan lariatated the ref and tied Dory in the ropes, the two doubled on Baba which caused Terry to run in. Hansen punched Terry and tossed him out, and when Terry ran back in, Stan was gone.

Ric Flair and Kabuki appeared the final three nights of the series. Flair and Tsuruta went the time limit on 12/10 in Nagoya, on 12/11 in Yokosuka Flair teamed with Windham & Fuller losing to Dory & Baba & Kabuki when Baba pinned Windham and on 12/12 in Tokyo, Flair was DQ'd for hitting the ref at 24:24 against Kabuki.

New Year series ran from 1/2 to 1/22. Steve Olsonoski, Kelly Kiniski, Umanosuke Ueda, Goro Tsurumi, Gypsy Joe, Lizmark (recognized as N.W.A. World's Middleweight champion) from Mexico, Great Kabuki and the Magic Dragon (Kazuhara Sonoda) all will appear for the entire set. Michael Hayes & Terry Gordy arrive 1/10 for the final two weeks.



Barry Windham above. Funks below



NEW JAPAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION
International HC - Tatsumi Fujinami
N.W.A. jr. HC - The Cobra

Antonio Inoki & Hulk Hogan won the annual Madison Square Garden tag team tournament downing Adrian Adonis & Dick Murdoch in the 12/8 Tokyo finals before a full house of 12,000 fans. Hogan use the lariat on Adonis, tagged Inoki who gave him the enzuigiri for the pin. Actually there was a much better match that night, a double count out (what else) with Kengo Kimura-Akira Maeda-Tatsumi Fujinami vs. Riki Chosyu-Animal Hamaguchi-Yoshiaki Yatsu.

This tourney ran differently, as the round-robin went on with the two leading point-getters going into the Tokyo main event. Actually the leading point-getting team was Andre the Giant & Swede Hanson. Andre & Swede lost their chance at reaching the finals on 12/6 in Osaka when in a match against Murdoch & Adonis, they stuffed Hanson on the arena floor causing him to suffer a "neck injury" and return home. Andre & Swede were the only unbeaten team. Murdoch & Adonis dropped a few via DQ and Inoki & Hogan lost earlier to Adonis & Murdoch in a bout Andre interfered in.

The bouts were scored five points for a pinfall win, four for a count out win, three for a DQ win, 2.5 points for a draw and zero for any type of loss. Going into championships Andre & Hansen led with 32 points, Inoki & Hogan had 28, Adonis & Murdoch 27.5, Chosyu & Hamaguchi 26.5, Fujinami & Maeda 24, Killer Khan & Tiger Toguchi 16.5, Seiji Sakaguchi & Kengo Kimura 14 while Otto Wanz & Wayne Bridges and Curt Hennig & Bobby Duncum each had five points. In the battle between the two bottom teams, Hennig & Duncum won, however Wanz & Bridges gained their lone win on 12/7 via forfeit as they were scheduled to battle Andre & Swede.

This group also drew nightly sellouts for the tag tournament. One of the interesting things was how well the Inoki-Hogan duo would click. It turns out, apparently things aren't so bad off between the two. Inoki was even an invited guest at Hogan's wedding 12/18 in Los Angeles and Inoki is even going to wrestle Hogan once again during the spring. Many newspapers reported Inoki and Hogan would have a falling out in the tourney to build-up a future match, but that didn't take place. Apparently Hogan really carried the team. The fans were unhappy seeing Hanson as Andre's partner which I guess doesn't surprise too many people.

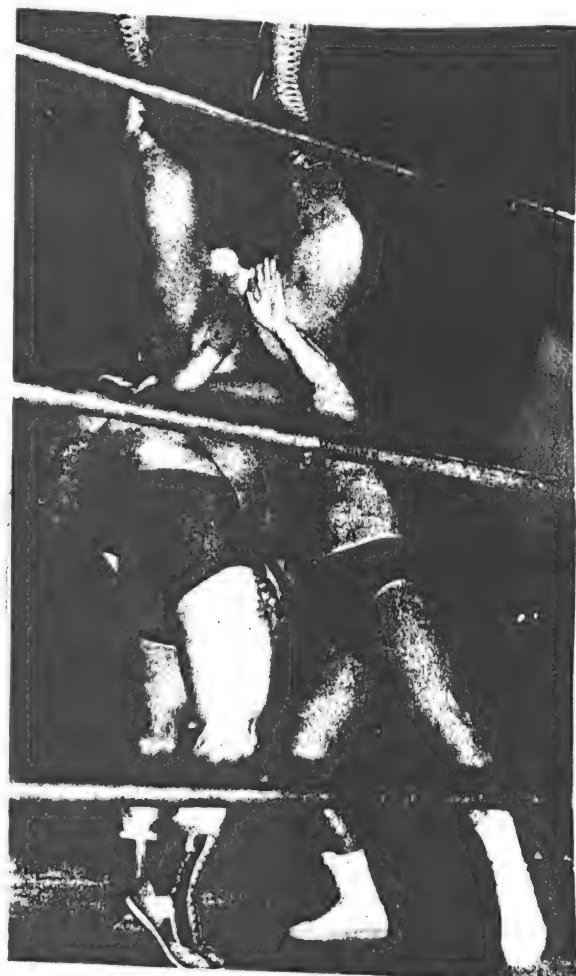
Signed for 1/1 in Tokyo was Inoki vs. Dusty Rhodes, Sakaguchi vs. Abdullah the Butcher, Chosyu & Yatsu vs. Fujinami & Maeda, The Cobra vs. Black Tiger and Dynamite Kid & his cousin Davey Boy Smith vs. Isamu Teranishi & Kuniaki Kobayashi. Tickets are priced at \$50, \$35, \$25, \$15 and \$7.50 which were the same prices as

in the tag tourney. By the way, that card will be televised, or should I say was televised live.

The series which starts 1/1 continues until 2/9. The big show 2/7 will crown the WWF jr. champ with the tourney consisting round-robin of Dynamite, Smith, Bret Hart, Black Tiger (Mark Rocco), Baby Face, Cobra, Kobayashi, Teranishi and Nobuhiko Takada. Allan Coage also appears the entire series. Rhodes was only in for one week, Abdullah until 1/28, Hogan is set to arrive 1/27 (funny, he's booked for Los Angeles 1/28), Mike Sharpe who is also booked in LA that night is due the same day (how come I can keep their schedules straight?). Jim Duggan was supposed to appear also but I'm told he is cancelling this tour.



The photo at the top is fairly obvious, the aftermath of the 12/8 tourney final. The bottom photo is something you'll never see again, Chosyu & Hamaguchi suplexing (yes, suplexing) Andre during a 12/3 tag bout Andre & Swede wound up winning (Andre pinned Hamaguchi).



MEXICO

Below is a complete listing of champions as of early December:
NWA World champions: Heavyweight - Ric Flair; Lightheavyweight - Ringo Mendoza (who I believe is Villano III); Middleweight - Lizmark; Welterweight - Americo Rocca. . . Universal World champions: Heavyweight - Enrique Vera; Lightheavyweight - Sangre Chicana; Jr. Lightheavy - El Signo; Middleweight - El Gran Hamada; Welterweight - El Matematico; Lightweight - Black Terry; Feather weight - Pequeno Solis. . . Mexican National champions: heavyweight - Pirata Morgan; cruiserweight - Angel Blanco; lightheavy - Mano Negra; Middle - Ultraman; Welter - Chamaco Velasquez; Light - Fuerza Guerrera; Feather - Negro Peralta. . . Ringo Mendoza won the NWA Lightheavy crown from El Satanico 10/23 in Guadalajara. . . Sangre Chicana won the UWA lightheavy from Fishman 10/9 in Mexico City. . . Fuerza Guerrera won the Mexican light title in an 11/6 Mexico City tourney. . . Angel Blanco became the first National cruiserweight champ on an 11/13 Mexico City tourney.

SOUTHWEST

Southwest HC - Scott Casey
USA jr. HC - Relampago Leone
Southwest TTC - Eric Embry & Ken Timbs

Bruiser Brody is the group's biggest draw and has been put into a feud with Voodoo Malumba (Big Red Reese), proclaimed a 450-pound cannibal from Uganda (who does that remind you of). Big Red carries a voodoo doll in the ring with him. They've packed small arenas (1300 seats or so) in Austin and Waco for their feud matches. Most bouts end in a double count out. It's funny that Brody won't take being pinned by anyone, not even, say Ric Flair, or Jumbo Tsuruta, yet he lets this individual who makes Kimala seem like Jack Brisco in his prime, hold him to draws. Actually Brody has appeared on several cards, but he's passed probably just about as many that he's booked on. The promotion has invented an eye injury suffered against Voodoo. Late Dec. in Austin, Brody was to wrestle Abdullah the Butcher in the main event and neither man showed up. Voodoo wound up getting pinned by Dick Murdoch in the main event.

Everything else is kind of the same although Scott Casey has been feuding with Adrian Street over the Southwest title. I've actually grown to enjoy Street's act, but his bouts with Casey are pretty bad. Bill Dundee is scheduled to be arriving very soon to feud with Street.

Bobby Jagers is back as reported last month, and lost to Street 1/4 in Waco. Mike Boyer, who referees for this group, wrestled for one week under his Memphis guise as Apocalypse in main events teaming with the Shepherders against Jagers-Fernandez-Dick Murdoch.

Don Carson is in wrestling, mainly losing openers. 11/24 San Antonio saw Relampago Leone beat Cesar Valentino via chunt out. Valentine holds the Azteca promotions World's jr. title in Mexico. Gino Hernandez is back from a self-induced exile from wrestling and has turned heel and lost several bouts with Casey.

Eric Embry & Ken Timbs went to a double DQ with Ricky Morton & Robert Gibson that show, causing the tag belts to be held up. Embry & Timbs won the 12/3 re-match and The Rock & Roll Express returned to Memphis.

WORLD CLASS

Texas HC - David Von Erich
WCWA 6 man TTC - Michael Hayes & Terry Gordy & Buddy Roberts
American TTC - King Parsons & Brian Adias

This group broke another attendance record with 19,675 fans selling out Reunion Arena for Christmas Star Wars. One thing must be said for this promotion, their Star Wars series give you about as fun an evening of wrestling with plenty of surprises and generally excellent endings of matches. But where is the Christmas spirit? Turning away perhaps as many as 8,000 fans on the coldest Christmas in the history of the city. I would say the weather played a big factor in the size of the crowd--if it was better it would have sold out perhaps a day or two sooner. They could probably put a good 4,500 in the Sportatorium down the street for closed circuit and the cameras are already there for the highly-rated TV show.

In the main bouts, a no dq no time limit tag bout sent Kevin & Mike Von Erich vs. Terry Gordy & Buddy Roberts. Stipulations were whichever Freebird lost the fall must leave town for one year. If either Kevin or Mike Von Erich was pinned, Kevin must leave town for one year and exiled Michael Hayes could return. The bout was tremendous, unfortunately for those watching it in the upcoming weeks on TV, the cameramen and announcer Bill Mercer did their worst jobs ever, missing every great move by Kevin and Mike's surprisingly good dropkicks. To make matters worse, when Santa Claus hit Mike with a chair causing the temperature in the building to zoom past 212° F, the cameras were somewhere else. Ref Bronko Lubich was KO'd causing good guy ref David Manning to run into the ring. Kevin pinned Gordy for the three count, and as Santa jumped in to congratulate Mike (who didn't see what hit him) & Kevin, Jolly ol' St. Nick pounded at some Von Erichs and piledrove Mike. Gordy then pinned Mike as ref Bronko Lubich recovered and counted the fall. Lubich and Manning began arguing about whose match it was and all that, but in the end, the first pin was accepted sending Gordy out for one year.

Also on the card David Von Erich got his long awaited World title shot at Ric Flair. The David going to retire if he didn't win stipulation mentioned the first two weeks of the build-up was forgotten as the card approached. Anyway Ric tossed David over the top ropes but ref Manning pretended he didn't see it. Ric hit Manning, who got up and refused to call for the bell. David put Ric in the claw at which point Ric grabbed the mike from TV commentator Bill Mercer and KO'd Dave Von Erich with it. Manning finally did DQ Flair.

American champ Chris Adams defended against Jimmy Garvin, and if Chris won, Sunshine and Precious would wrestle in a five minute lumberjack match with no referee. It turned out Garvin won, using the trunks. The title was held up the next afternoon because of how Garvin won the match. Strange, when Adams won the title, it was only because of Sunshine's interference. The other main bouts saw Kerry Von Erich over Kimala via DQ and Kerry slammed him after the match. If he had done so during the bout he'd have gotten \$5000. King Parsons & Brian Adias upset the Super Destroyers to win the American tag belts. Whew--gate was about \$210,000 or so.

By the way, Santa Claus was indeed Michael Hayes, who disappeared after his loser leave town losses to Kerry Thanksgiving week.

On a fictitious date between 12/26 and 1/2 in a fictitious unnamed city "in Georgia" the Freebirds regained the 6 man belts from the Von Erichs with this announced scenario -- "David puts the claw on a Freebird, the ref disq. David. The Von Erichs learn that the claw was banned and that the title could change on a DQ at that point after it was called."

Yes, the one year suspension of Hayes & Gordy is running out quick. It should end, say 1/30 in Ft. Worth for the next Star Wars show which sends Flair vs. Mike Von Erich (I'm not making this up as I go along), Freebirds vs. Von Erichs for the 6 man title, Adams vs. Garvin for the American title which is held up inside a cage, with the stipulation if Chris wins, Sunshine and Precious will undoubtedly go into the cage for five minutes with no ref, Parsons & Adias defend against the Super D's in a return match, also Parsons will wrestle Akbar that night also, and Junkyard Dog takes on Kimala.

The Flair-Mike Von Erich match has these stipulations, if Flair can pin Mike in ten minutes which won't happen, then David can never get another title shot at Flair. If Ric can't pin Mike, then David gets a shot and Dave picks the time, Dave picks the place and Dave names all the stipulations.

Parsons and Super D #2 actually are to meet 1/9 Ft. Worth and if King can't beat Super D #2 within 15 minutes, which he'll do, he must retire from wrestling. If King

wins, which he will, then he meets Akbar 1/30.

Adias, who is terrible, is still TV champ although on 1/2 he got pinned in three minutes by the Missing Link, who is now managed by Akbar. Manning ended up giving Adias the title when Link tossed Brian over the top ropes after the match had ended. Another of Manning's coups came on 12/9 in Dallas during a Gordy-Garvin vs. Adams-John Mantell bout. Gordy finished Mantell off with the spike after ten minutes or so, although Adams was the legal man. Kevin jumped into the ring and he and Gordy fought, for a good two minutes in a wild brawl before Adams finally pinned Garvin to win the match, although Kevin had been involved when he wasn't supposed to.

Parsons has really looked good this past month. He should get burned a little more often. Maybe for July 4th Star Wars Akbar can light him with a skyrocket. He'll come back and wrestle like Dynamite Kid or something.

San Antonio fans are also now fortunate. They get to see Star Wars live. The 11/24 card was replayed in the Coliseum three nights later. Since an average San Antonio crowd for World Class is 8,000, it would be a safe assumption that the replay of the Kerry-Hayes loser leaves cage, Adams vs Garvin American title for the first time, David vs Kimala and an even better match, Flair vs Kevin (instead of Gordy vs Kevin) which was a non-title match Kevin won drew whatever that Coliseum held and turned thousands away. San Antonio fans were told that Adams 11/27 win over Garvin was the title change and the Von Erichs 12/4 6 man win over Gordy-Roberts-Garvin was also a title change even tho the Von Erichs had won the title 12/2 in Dallas over Gordy-Roberts-Flair.

MID SOUTH

North American HC - Junkyard Dog
Mid South TTC - Jim Neidhart & Butch Reed

The actual date of Dog's winning the North American title was 10/26 in Shreveport in a bout Dusty Rhodes officiated. The 11/19 Superdome Dog-Reed bout had Dog defending the title, not winning as I reported last month.

Niccoli Volkoff is now protesting to the Russian embassy about him being stripped of the North American belt. Volkoff even beat Dog 12/16 Houston in a non-title match. Jim Duggan pinned Jake Roberts on that card. The line-ups for Mid South cards I've seen recently have been atrocious. The Oklahoma cards are okay, only because they've added King Parsons, who made a big hit here, vs. Super Destroyer #1 and Chris Adams vs. Jimmy Garvin with the girls to the Mid South regulars.

Bobby Eaton cancelled his Japan tour so he and Dennis Condrey have been debuting with wins over teams like Lanny Poffo & Rick Rood. Other Memphis folks who have arrived are

Jimmy Cornette as their manager and Carl Fergie. Jerry Lawler made a Shreveport TV taping in December as part of a deal where Bill Watts and Jerry Jarrett will pool resources if necessary if faced with a promotional war.

Actually the crowds in Houston were even lower than I reported last time. The two-ring Battle Royal on 11/18 drew closer to 3,000 than 7,000. Others shows have drawn in the 1,500 to 2,500 range. Because of that the \$12-\$10-\$7 ticket prices have been dropped to \$10-\$8-\$6.

The cards haven't improved, 12/16 had Dog vs Volkoff non-title, Reed & Neidhart keeping the tag belts against Mr. Wrestling II & Steve Williams (two men who possess every ingredient necessary to form a bad team--age, lack of experience, lack of talent in both cases, overpromotion in both cases, abominable interviews in both cases), Duggan's win over Jake Roberts and Jose Lothario pinning Black Gordman. The rest were prelims. 12/30 saw Dog vs Volkoff and Nick Bockwinkel vs Wrestling II in a pair of title bouts plus Lothario vs Gordman again. 1/13 headlined by Dog & Duggan vs Volkoff & Crusher Darso with Williams as ref. I sure hope Williams makes it in the USFL so fans of this area get a six month reprieve. Darso is now a villain and billed as a Russian sympathizer. He lost a Shreveport bout to Volkoff, who manhandled the 255 pounder. Darso was so impressed with Volkoff that he became his tag partner. Bill Watts is having a field day with this one.

Speaking of Watts, in his promotion of Volkoff, I think he's finally gone over the edge between the line between effective promotion and bad taste. I don't mind (actually that's too strong, I've gotten used to is a better term) using a supposed Russian to take advantage of perhaps some hostile feelings in the people. In Volkoff's promotion it's much worse, Watts is trying to pretend World War III is going to take place next week, and Volkoff is the messenger boy. During Nic's matches, Watts spends the time with a social commentary about how the Russian people are waiting to find our weakness and take over our country and gets actually mad at the fact that fans don't hate this Russian as much as he would like. "Don't you see what they're doing in Grenada. They've got 60 percent of the world right now. THEY'RE ATHIESTS!"

AWA

AWA HC - Nick Bockwinkel
AWA TTC - Ken Patera & Jerry Blackwell
AWA Lt. HC - Buck Zumhofe

This area is certainly the one hardest hit by Vince McMahon, losing their TV announcer, their franchise wrestler and some others.

Hulk Hogan was scheduled to appear on most of the major cards in the main event from the middle of ~~January~~ ^{December}

and of course was a no-show everywhere. The Christmas show in St. Paul drew 17,900 fans and turned away others for Hulk's return in an eight man tag team set as Hogan-Greg Gagne-Jim Brunzell-Ray Stevens vs Sheiks Ken Patera-Jerry Blackwell-Mr. Saito-David Schults. It turned out Hogan was replaced by Baron Von Raschke, who had actually left the area and just came home for Christmas and I understand Baron gave the match of his life, which even then I doubt was too good. Schults also was replaced by Sheik Adnan El Kaissey. Schults' non-appearance was actually announced before-hand because he was given a lifetime suspension from the AWA with no reason given. The story I get is that when Schults found out he was set to go to New York, he kind of went to Verne with a "Take this job and shove it" type speech. By the way, no refunds were offered to those thousands who came expressly to see Hogan. Also that night Mad Dog Vachon beat Nick Bockwinkel via DQ in a title match, Rick Martel beat Billy Graham via DQ, Billy Robinson and Brad Rheingans went to a 20:00 draw and Jesse Ventura won via submission from Steve Olsonoski.

Speaking of Kaissey, I noticed that Adnan Kaisy wrestled at Oklahoma State and placed fourth in the NCAA collegiate championships in 1958 and 1959. I was under the impression he'd wrestled professional as Al Kashey prior to that. If you don't tell the NCAA I won't.

The following night in San Francisco fans were offered refunds bringing the crowd down to 3000 for the same eight man (by the way, the good guys win these matches when Greg & Jim simultaneously pin Patera & Blackwell) except Vachon took Von Raschke's place and Stevens supposedly wrestled his best bout in years. Interesting undercard bout saw Bobby Heenan finally weigh in at 214 3/4, under the 215 limit to challenge for Zumhofe's "title" but Buck pinned him with Lord Blears as guest ref. Heenan had earlier missed making weight on the two previous S.F. shows, pinning Zumhofe both times.

That week in Phoenix it was even worse. It was only the second AWA card in Phoenix and was set for Bockwinkel vs. Hogan for the title. On the previous, first area card, Hogan not only pinned Blackwell but won a 20 man Battle Royal. It doesn't look good when on you're second show in town, your headliner doesn't appear.

Interesting to note that the AWA pro-mo in St. Paul, even up to this week, have Wally Karbo saying they're going to try and sign Hogan for the next card. By the way, Hogan's non-appearances were announced as he'd suffered an injury while in Japan.

Jesse Ventura is back full-time now and although he receives enthusiastic cheers by the cult fans is going to wrestle as a villain at least for a

few more weeks. I understand he's received some standing ovations on TV tapes. By the way, Jesse wasn't in Memphis the last few weeks, he was in Grenada helping the troops. He's switched his act from punk to the military, while keeping his six earrings. He's also now teaming with Saito, forming the "Far East-West Connection." If you recall, Ventura & Adrian Adonis were billed as the "East West Connection" for several years here. Saito had been teaming with Schults.

There also are a pair of newcomers to the area. With Hogan gone, Gagne went to desperate measures to bring The Crusher from under the mothballs. In all seriousness, Crusher is the worst wrestler in the entire world. He was the worst in '81 when he retired and two-and-a-half years off didn't make him any better. He's talking about having a severed nerve in the arm as the reason for his long-time vanishing act. Crusher was in Vachon's corner 12/25 for the bout with Bockwinkel and got the largest cheer anyone in the Twin Cities has received since Hogan's 4/24 bout with Nick. Crusher & Mad Dog have gone to a few double DQ's for the Far-East-West connection and Crusher also beat Saito via DQ 12/17 in Rockford in a bout where he replaced no-show Hogan.

The other newcomer, a member of the Bobby Heenan family, also fits this area's pattern of bringing in washed-up wrestlers, Blackjack Mulligan. Mulligan will feud with his ex-partner Whitejack Lanza.

One correction, last month I noted the 11/24 St. Paul show was down to 6,800--actually the crowd was 13,100 for the non-Hogan show.

CENTRAL STATES

Central States HC - Buzz Tyler
Central States TV - Bobby Fulton
Central States TTC - vacant

The tag title was declared vacant when 666 "injured" Bob Brown who was co-champ with Buzz Tyler. Ron Starr & Tully Blanchard then wrestled Tyler & King Cobra for the held up belts on 1/5, ending in a double DQ. Brown has since returned to action.

Blanchard arrived as the Midnight Stallion under a hood as Tyler's new tag partner, but the two got into a fight with Tully turning villain and being unmasked. Interesting to note that in that 12/15 bout, their foes, 666 & Man Eating Beast (Man Mountain Link) also had a falling out when the ex-Intern attacked MEB and manager Abdullah the Great (Ali Hassan, Jack Courgar).

Fulton won the TV title from Roger Kirby 12/1 in K.C.

Other recent KC shows have seen: 12/8 Tiger Mask Ken Wayne drew Scott Ferris, Fulton beat Berry Orton (Bob's younger brother who has since left), Kimala beat Mike Pagel, 666 pinned Tyler non-title and Paul Orndorff DDQ Austin Idol. . . 12/15 saw Buddy Landell (who has since left) beat

Ted Cates, who I didn't know still wrestled, Tommy Rogers came in and beat Grizzly Evans, Tiger Mask II beat younger Orton, Kimala beat Bruiser Brody via DQ and Buck Robley (sub for Idol) went to a draw with Orndorff. . . 12/25 saw a one-night tourney, winner to get \$2000 and a shot at Flair, with Bruiser Brody winning pinning 666 in the final. . . 12/29 saw Brody beat Flair via DQ when 666 jumped Brody, 666 pinned MEB in :54 and Tyler pinned Blanchard in a title match. . . 1/5 card was headlined by Brody pinning Ted DiBiase which at one point was announced as a National title match, but guess not.

ST. LOUIS WRESTLING CLUB

Missouri State HC - Harley Race

Although it has been printed in other publications that the Chrome Dome Connection had thrown in the towel to the WWF, apparently that isn't so, at least for an appearance sake. Someone told me, actually several weeks before it was announced Verne & Bob would still promote here and got a new TV outlet, that part of McMahon's deal was to have a pretend promotional conflict so McMahon could get the public support Larry Matysik apparently had earlier in the year by being the "underdog" so to speak. After two or three shows, Gagne/Geigel would pack it in but the fans wouldn't be resentful of WWF's taking over from the NWA as they would have been otherwise. Makes sense, but with all the recent trouble between Gagne and McMahon, I can't see it.

The 1/6 Kiel Auditorium show drew an announced sellout crowd of 10,752 (keep in mind this promotion pads attendance greatly, the 12/9 card was announced at 5,217 but I'm told crowd was closer to 2,500) to see Ric Flair down Bruiser Brody via DQ in 24 minutes when Brody tossed Ric over the top ropes. Harley Race won the Missouri State title from David Von Erich, Gene Kiniski & Dick the Bruiser made a trip back from the shuffleboard courts to lose to AWA tag champs Ken Patera & Jerry Blackwell when Blackwell pinned Kiniski, Dory Funk and Bob Orton went to a 20:00 draw Tully Blanchard (sub for Buddy Landell) pinned Buzz Tyler, Ron Richie pinned 666 and King Cobra & Tiger Mask II beat Scott Ferris & Roger Kirby.

KPLR-TV, which this promotion had been with for hundreds of years, is now carrying McMahon's Wrestling at the Chase. One reason this crowd was so impressive was Geigel had lost his TV outlet the week before so no last week promotion of the show, and the two previous weeks they only showed a tape of the 11/10 Kansas City show (Race vs DiBiase, Brody vs Kimala etc) with no interviews and little promotion regarding the 1/6 card.

This group now has made a deal with KDNL-TV (Ch. 30) which was the station Matysik ran on. They will run a tape from the Kansas City Auditorium from 10-11 p.m. Saturday nights, followed by

an hour of AWA studio matches. Both shows have interviews concerning the upcoming show. In addition, they run commercial time on World Class Wrestling shown 10 a.m. Sunday, which goes head-to-head with McMahon's USA cable which airs the same time. McMahon's Chase show runs at 11 am on Ch. 11 Sunday's.

The next card at Kiel is 2/3, a week before McMahon's, with an 18 man Battle Royal for \$35,000 (McMahon announced his for \$30,000) with Barry Windham, Blackjack Mulligan, Race, Pater, Blackwell, Kaissey and company. Nick Bockwinkel will defend his title here very soon. I have no idea if Flair will be back.

CWA/JARRETT PROMOTIONS

International HC - Austin Idol
Southern HC - Jerry Lawler
Mid American HC - Randy Savage
Southern TTC - The Fabulous Ones

Apparently the CWA World tag team title is no longer being mentioned. The U.S. jr. title is also no longer mentioned as champion Bill Dundee lost a week's worth of loser-leaves-town matches to Steve Keirn including 1/1 Memphis.

The biggest surprise was the appearance of Randy Savage. Anyone familiar with the old ICW TV show would never believe Savage and Lawler would ever be in the same ring. At least they didn't match Savage with Dundee. As many folks already know, Savage and Dundee had an altercation about a year-and-a-half back after a card in the parking lot or in the parking lot of a gym (hard to get the straight story) with Dundee grabbing a gun from his car, Savage getting the gun and hitting Dundee with it and breaking his jaw. The case wound up being thrown out of court. Savage used to claim Lawler blacklisted him out of wrestling, and once on an interview claimed he went to Jerry's house in Memphis, threw a brick through the window and challenged Lawler to step outside. Randy wound up spending the night behind the walls, or so he claimed.

All this made Savage wrestling for this group kind of unbelievable. Not only that, Savage is easily the best wrestler on the circuit.

Savage debuted on 12/5 Memphis getting disq. against Lawler on a card which saw the Fabulous Ones DDQ The Road Warriors drew 8,500 fans, more than double the weekly average. Savage and Lawler wrestled again 12/12 in a cage with Jerry winning. Savage wound up beating Terry Taylor for the Mid American belt 12/26 Memphis. Taylor had beaten Buddy Landell for the strap 12/1 Lexington. Lawler also beat Ken Patera 11/29 Memphis and Jerry Blackwell 12/19.

The Fabulous Ones won the Southern tag belts from the Bruise Brothers (Porkchop Cash & Dream Machine) on the 11/29 Memphis card.

Andy Kaufman also came in for

11/15 and 11/22 shows with Jerry Lawler. The first was a handicap boxing match with Jimmy Hart as Kaufman's partner, which Lawler was DQ'd in. The second was a straight boxing match which Lawler KO'd Kaufman in. Both shows drew 3,600 which shows this thing has worn out. Kaufman's earlier appearances drew 6,500 to 8,500.

Jerry Lawler and Austin Idol, who are both good guys, then met 12/26 to determine who would wrestle Nick Bockwinkel the following week. Jimmy Hart then asked to be in Lawler's corner, saying he hated Idol even worse than Lawler. Lawler turned him down. Hart then offered Idol \$5000 to be in his corner which Austin accepted. Everyone assumed Idol would wrestle as a villain, but instead the bout was totally scientific. The ref wound up KO'd and Hart ran into the ring, hit Idol with a chain, pulled the \$5000 check out of Idol's boot and left, leaving Lawler to pin Idol.

Also on the 12/26 show was a loser leave the first family (which Hart manages) match sending the Bruise Brothers against The Grapplers. The two teams first met on 12/19 as Hart accused Eddie Marlin (the visible promoter) of trying to break-up the family and said it wouldn't work, the bout would be scientific. Naturally it turned into an uncontrollable DDQ brawl. On 12/26, Hart, who showed no favoritism the first time, sat in the Bruise Brothers corner. Naturally the Grapplers won, and then quit the family. The 1/1 show with Lawler vs Bockwinkel also had Grapplers vs Bruise Brothers with the Grapplers mask vs. Dream & Porkchop's hair, Keirn vs Dundee loser leaves (take that back, I just noticed the Keirn-Dundee loser leave was on the 12/26 show) Idol vs Jos LeDuc, Rock'n'Roll Express vs The A team in a stretcher death match, Terry Taylor vs King Konga sent by J.J. Dillon. The Road Warriors wrestled the Fabs once again on 1/9 Memphis.

The A-team (Roger Smith & Don Bass) "injured" Robert Gibson, so Ricky Morton teamed with Jimmy Valiant 12/20 Louisville to win a stretcher match from them. Les Thornton came in as World's jr. champ beating Dundee on a reversed decision that night.

SOUTHEAST

Southeast HC - Jerry Stubbs
Alabama HC - Jerry Stubbs
U.S. jr. HC - Ken Lucas
Southeastern TTC - Ron Starr & Wayne Farris

The Southeastern belt was held up after a bout between champion Jos LeDuc and Robert Fuller, and a tourney was held 12/3 in Dothan won by Bob Armstrong. Bob dropped the belt during Christmas week to Jerry Stubbs, the unmasked Mr. Olympia. Bob also lost a few no DQ matches with World's champ Ric Flair including 1/2 Birmingham. The two also met 12/16 in Birmingham with Pops losing via DQ. Bob and son Brad have now left for Georgia, while

son Scott is still around. With both Robert Fuller & Jimmy Golden returning and Bob Armstrong leaving, apparently the Fuller-Welch family is back in control.

Ken Lucas beat Rip Rogers for the U.S. jr. title, then won a re-match where he got possession of Rogers' valet Brenda Britton for a week. The following week Lucas wrestles Les Thornton for the NWA jr. HC and Les was DQ'd when Rogers interfered.

Super Olympia (Arn Anderson/Marty Lunde) turned on partner Jacques Rougeau and is now a villain. The two first met 12/3 in the Southeast title tourney, and their bout turned into a brawl. Super O apologized and to make up for it agreed to team with Jacques against tag champs Ron Starr & Wayne Farris on TV, ending quickly as Super O refused to tag Jacques, then joined in a triple-team on him. Super O then defeated and "injured" Jacques' brother Armond. He was only in the area one week and I'm told is really bad. Newcomers are Boris Zurcohv and Charlie Book.

NORTHWEST

Northwest HC - Rip Oliver
Northwest TTC - Curt Hennig & Irish Pat McGee (Scott McGhee)

Rip Oliver downed Billy Jack on 12/25 Seattle in a loser leaves town cage match, sending BJ to Florida. Billy had earlier won the Northwest title on 12/14 Seattle. The cage match was for the title.

Curt Hennig & Irish Pat McGee downed The Assassin & Dynamite Kid on 12/23 Eugene to win the tag belts. I'd love to see that match. That was necessary because Dynamite was due in Japan 1/1. By the way, Dynamite had kept his head shaved after losing that hair match to Buddy Rose in October.

The correct dates of the title changes last month were Oliver & Assassin losing to Hennig & Buddy Rose 11/5 Portland and Hennig & Rose losing to Assassin & Dynamite 11/12 Portland.

Mike Miller is back from an injury feuding with Jules Strongbow. Newcomers are Tom Prichard, Doug Somers and Steve Pardee. Stan Stasiak is now Don Koss' sidekick on the TV show from Portland. Stasiak handles play-by-play on the Salem TV show. Al Madril has left.

TORONTO

Canadian HC - Sgt. Slaughter
Canadian TV - Don Kernodle

The 11/13 show (Piper over Valentine DQ, Mosca Sr. & Valiant over The Destroyer & Leo Burke who subbed for Briscos, Mulligan vs Superstar) drew 13,224.

They even drew 5300 for a spot show in Kitchener with both Ric Flair & Mosca winning via COR from Dick Slater & Bob Orton and Jimmy Valiant beating Kabuki, who subbed

for Harley Race, who was then World champ, on 11/20. Somebody who runs the NWA ought to get these champions to their matches on time.

12/4 saw Piper beat Valentine in a non-title dog collar match, Mosca & Mulligan over Sgt. Slaughter & Don Kernodle when Mosca pinned Slaughter. This was Slaughter & Kernodle's first tag team appearance together since the 5/1 Greensboro loss which had the stipulations they could never team up again. Also Buddy "Heart-Throb" Hart (Bret Hart from Calgary) pinned Kabuki. Despite the name, Hart is a good guy, and I'm told didn't look good in the match. I've seen him enough in Calgary and Japan to know he's quite good, but working with Kabuki doesn't help. Crowd was 10,003.

12/26 may have been Toronto's worst show in history, with Roddy Piper & Dory Funk beating The Assassins and Jimmy Valiant & Johnny Weaver beating Gary Hart & Baron Von Raschke as the only non-prelim matches.

FLORIDA

Southern HC - Ron Bass
Florida HC - Mike Rotundo
United States TTC - Ron Bass & One Man Gang

Mike Rotundo won the 12/16 St. Pete tourney for the vacated Florida title. I believe there is a new champion, Florida jr. title, which is held by Hector Guerrero. Guerrero beat Dennis Brown in several tournament matches, then was set for more tourney bouts with Mike Graham which I guess he also won. Hector recently on TV made some suggestive remarks in spanish to Barbara Blary, who does some interview work for the Solie show. Barbara speaks fluent spanish and was upset. Gordon couldn't believe a member of the Guerrero family could talk that way to a lady.

Bass & Gang won the tag belts under very unusual circumstances 11/30 at the Tampa TV show. The champs were Dusty Rhodes & Blackjack Mulligan. Bass & Gang were scheduled to wrestle Rhodes & Mike Davis on TV. Manager J.J. Dillon asked Rhodes to make it a title match, Dusty didn't say anything but did nod his head. The bout ended with Dusty getting counted out of the ring, which I'm not sure constitutes a title change here or not. The following week it was announced Dillon sent films to the NWA which awarded Bass & Gang the belts because Rhodes made an agreement the belts were up.

In other strange situation, Barry Windham is now wearing a mask as the Yellow Dog with one goal in mind, winning the saddle Ron Bass has which supposedly belongs to Rhodes. Of course the promotion insists Windham is still in Japan (tour ended 12/12, Dog showed up 12/16) and deep in the finals of the All-Asian tourney. They admit he resembles Windham, but you can't be in two places at once. The name Yellow Dog has some connotations also. On the "Saga of the Family" (which Rhodes-Mulligan-Windham are

calling themselves now) a sometimes funny but more often inane weekly segment of the TV show, Dillon showed a photo of a guy with a cowboy hat over his face next to a yellow dog with a bandana around its neck, the same kind of bandana Windham wears around his neck. Anyway, Dillon claims the photo is of Mulligan as a teenager with his dog Barfy. When the dog died, BJ decided to name his first born after the dog, making it Barry. The conclusion was, therefore, it was appropriate to call Windham a yellow dog. When Windham really did leave for Japan, Dillon & Bass start doing the Yellow Dog bit and then here comes a wrestler calling himself. . .

Billy Jack arrived with more than anyone's fair share on fanfare. According to Solie, "Billy wrestled Harley Race on 11/23 in the Kingdome in Seattle before 44,000 fans to a sizzling 60 minute draw which took so much out of Race he was easy pickings for Ric Flair the next night in Greensboro." Furthermore Billy is billed as the most charismatic figure in American professional sports since Dusty Rhodes.

Kareem Muhammed and Elijah Akeem are probably gone by now, each having been pinned by Davis. Newcomers include Kendo Nagasaki, The Infernos, Anthony Charles (son of Tony Charles, not Scott Armstrong) and Black Bart (Rick Harris).

Bart is supposed to be a childhood friend of Ron Bass. However he didn't share a friendship with Bass' other childhood friends like Rhodes and Mulligan. I've always gotten a kick out of how all these guys were supposed to have gone to grade school, high school, college etc. together. Bass is billed from Pampa, Texas, which is close to Colorado and probably 500 miles from Austin, Dusty's home town. Mulligan's home town is Eagle Pass, which is on the Mexican border and probably 500 miles from either place. Actually, there's a simple explanation, they just have large school districts here in Texas.

By the way, back to Billy Jack, he is also now, an Indian (remember the movie?).

Buzz & Brett Sawyer beat the Road Warriors on 12/14 Miami Beach and 12/16 St. Pete. Miami show drew 3600, which is about their average.

Saving the best for last, on 12/28 in Tampa (shown 12/31) at the year-end special, there was a special tribute to Rhodes on his ten years in Florida. Plaques were sent from major promoters around the world like Jim Crockett, Jerry Jarrett, Bill Watts, etc. Rhodes' family was on hand also. In the middle of all this, out of nowhere comes Kevin Sullivan. Sullivan throws black powder at Rhodes but Dusty ducks. The powder goes in Dusty's sisters eyes. His sister was shown being taken to a hospital. Sullivan was suspended for one year on 9/20. My how time flies when you're having fun.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WRESTLING

National HC - Ted DiBiase

WCW TV - Jake Roberts

WCW jr. HC - Les Thornton

National TTC - Buzz & Brett Sawyer

Catching up on some business it was reported here last month that the Sawyers won the tag titles from the Road Warriors 11/27 in Cincinnati and it was forgotten and no explanation was made on TV about it. Actually there's more to that, that week on the Northern tour, the Sawyers won every night including 12/3 in Cleveland and in Saginaw, Lansing, etc. Each next night the Road Warriors would enter with the straps, the Sawyers would win them again. Of course when the 12/3 and 12/10 TV shows were aired, not an explanation to the fans who had seen the title changes which had been forgotten, nothing. The least they could have done was tell people the Warriors won them back in a card game on the bus that night. Speaking of 12/3 Cleveland, another title "changed hands" that night as Tommy Rich pinned Ted DiBiase to "win" the National title. Yes, Ted was champ the next night.

The Sawyer brothers did, however win a title match that was remembered, on 12/27 in Canton, Ohio and are the new tag champions.

Also, I reported last month that the 11/24 tag tourney won by Butch Reed & Pez Whatley saw them beat Randy Rose & Jimmy Randolph in the finals. Actually when tourney highlights were shown 12/4, that match was shown. Ole & Solie said it was the final match (although neither could recall exactly who Reed & Whatley's opponents were). Actually it was the first match of the tourney. Actually I must take blame for the mistake because if I haven't learned no to believe anything those two say by now. . .

What really happened in the tourney which drew the largest Omni crowd of the year (12,000) was that Reed & Whatley beat Magnum T.A. & Randy Savage in the finals. Savage & Magnum beat the Bruise Brothers (without Jimmy Hart) in one semi, while in the other Reed & Whatley beat King Kong Bundy & Jim Neidhart with yes-- Reed pinning Neidhart for the fall.

The 12/4 show however drew 1,950 to see Ric Flair vs. Tommy Rich. It's easy to figure out why the crowd was so low. The last time Ole announced Tommy Rich would get a World title match (vs. Harley Race), the champ didn't show and refunds weren't offered. What was to say Flair would show.

And now for this month's "fun" news. As everyone knows by now that gets cable, Ted DiBiase signed to wrestle Tommy Rich in a title match on 12/25 Omni and if Ted lost, he'd leave town. If Tommy lost, he would not only leave town but retire from wrestling. Tommy lost. He not only wrestled the entire next week on tour, pinning Ted in every city, but even made a TV appearance, despite the hype that "you could be seeing Tommy's last match" for the Omni card.

On 12/31 Tommy sheepishly said he didn't want to retire. At the end of the show, it was reported that Tommy could no longer wrestle. On the 1/7 show both Solie & Ole made hints like Tommy could buy a ticket and jump Ted from the audience or catch him in a dark alley, so Ted you'd better watch. I love what the moronic fan must think. . . all I have to do is buy a ticket and I've got free reign to jump Ted, or the same way in the parking lot after the show. I don't think that's something you should encourage. Oh, Tommy is booked to wrestle the entire tour which started 1/8. He'll probably show up on TV 1/14 under a mask.

Other matches on 12/25, which I'll bet drew a really good crowd because of the Rich retirement stipulation, saw Buzz Sawyer beat The Sheik, the original one of Detroit fame. Sheik is the only wrestler who is too washed-up that even the AWA won't use him. Buzz also beat Paul Ellering in a lights out match that night which saw Buzz, Brett and the brother they won't admit to, Tommy Rogers all holding Paul down and giving him a ridiculous looking haircut. Les Thornton beat Tommy Rogers for their version of the World jr. title which is a surprise because Tommy won most of their bouts including 12/31 television and several arena matches for the title when Ole Anderson ran in to count the pin, but at least Ole remembered to explain why it was overruled. The TV bout was non-title. Stan Hansen & Buggy McGraw beat the Road Warriors via DQ although Stan took a beating after the bout when Buggy was disposed of. Brett Sawyer pinned Jake Roberts, but after the 10 minutes in which the TV title is at stake.

1/15 Omni has Buzz vs. Jos LeDuc, DiBiase defending against Bob Armstrong, Roberts defending against Jerry Lawler, Road Warriors-Killer Karl Krupp vs. Jerry Brisco-Buggy McGraw-Brett Sawyer, Tommy Rogers vs. Brad Armstrong with the winner getting a shot at Les Thornton, and Ron Garvin vs. Pez Whatley.

In the latter bout, Whatley is the bad guy. Actually Pez hasn't turned bad guy over an incident, he just did one nasty, actually just mildly nasty interview on 12/31 but wasn't even on TV 1/7. Actually I know Pez is the bad guy. I don't know how many fans realize it yet. Whatley went 60 minutes with Ric Flair on 12/3 in Cleveland.

Some newcomers include Johnny Rich while Joe Lightfoot has left for Florida. King Kong Bundy still challenges fans to bodyslam him. It must be pointed out that the officials at all Georgia cards when picking the fans who try to slam Kong are very careful, as you can imagine, as to who they let in the ring. They won't be big bodybuilders or powerlifters to be sure.

MID ATLANTIC

United States HC - Dick Slater
Mid Atlantic HC - Dick Slater

The big area news is that Ricky Steamboat announced his retirement from wrestling. It was kind of a major surprise, occurring on 12/25 in Charlotte. He & Jay Youngblood have vacated the World tag team titles. Interestingly enough, Youngblood is also out of the area having suffered a "broken ankle" against Jack & Jerry Brisco who left, and then returned, in a cage match. I'm not sure if the Briscos are even still in this area or not, but they showed up Christmas week for tag title bouts. Most people seem to think he's sincere about it. The reasons sound sincere, he's opening up a gym in Greensboro and was tired of all the traveling in the business. Most of the people who believe Steamboat to be sincere also believe he'll be back within six months and rekindle his feud with Ric Flair before Starcade '84.

Steamboat's farewell tour has seen him pin Ivan Koloff on several occasions. Koloff has been teaming a lot with Don Kernodle and both are managed by Gary Hart. Kernodle, by the way, looks extremely good doing lariats off the top ropes and the quickest take-downs since Mr. Saito's first week in the AWA. Strangely, Steamboat Charlotte farewell on 1/8 was to be against Sgt. Slaughter. With Koloff as a newcomer, perhaps Piper's leaving wasn't a "theft." More later on that. Ricky's last match is set for 1/15 in Greensboro against Koloff. As you can imagine, crowds have picked up for this, but only returning them to average level.

Greg Valentine is on his way to becoming a good guy. On 12/12 in Greenville Valentine was defending his U.S. title against Piper when both Dick Slater and Bob Orton appeared. They challenged Valentine and wound up with Slater and Valentine fighting. Slater then beat Valentine sometime the week before Christmas to win the title. Valentine had been set for several dog collar title bouts with Piper, which Roddy won (If Roddy was leaving and Greg was staying and about to become the top good guy, why would Roddy win all these matches?)

Several Georgia wrestlers such as The Road Warriors and manager Paul Ellering, Tommy Rich and Buzz Sawyer have appeared on various TV tapes including 12/13 in Winston-Salem.

Several newcomers include Angelo Mosca Jr., who I'm told has improved to where he's at least respectable, Baron Von Raschke who promptly turned on Gary Hart and is now teaming with Jimmy Valiant, Ernie Ladd who Hart manages and will feud with Angelo Mosca Sr.

Charlie Brown, by the way, still holds the Mid Atlantic TV title. Valiant donned the Charlie Brown outfit on 12/25 in Charlotte and pinned Kabuki, who came back for two

weeks between Japan tours. Later that same card he interfered in a match, as Jimmy Valiant. If you've noted Valiant without his beard, it was because of an incident where Paul Jones and The Assassins cut it off him the week before Christmas. I thought that was pretty sad, making thousands of tiny insects looking for a new home before Christmas. Dusty Rhodes ran in the ring to chase the villains away. Rhodes has been in several cities interfering in matches, but has yet to wrestle in most of them.

Ric Flair was set to wrestle in several Mid Atlantic cities the first week of the year and missed the match because he was in Alabama at the time. Things like this do much more harm than good in the long run. Crowds will be lower next time Flair is to appear because the fans won't know if he'll be there or not.

12/10 Greensboro, the first show after Starcade, drew 3,000 to see Steamboat & Youngblood vs. Slater & Orton and Wahoo McDaniel & Valiant vs. Assassins. 12/26 show drew about 5,500 for Ricky & Jay vs. Briscos in a cage, Piper vs. Valentine dog collar.

Dory Funk returned from Japan and has been ~~tanning~~ with Valiant and Rufus against Assassins.

Some of the teams that were in the 1/8 World tag team tourney in Greensboro included David & Kerry Von Erich, Buzz Sawyer & McDaniel, Assassins, Slater & Orton, Koloff & Kernodle, Rhodes & Valiant and one or two others.

LATE NOTES

Tito Santana to appear 1/13 Houston against Butch Reed. Fans there will be shocked at the sight of good wrestling. It's been a while. . . Steve Regal set for some AWA bouts against Buck Zumhofe for his title. . . **FLASH: DON KERNODLE & BOB ORTON WON NWA TAG TITLE IN W/8 CHARLOTTE TOURNAMENT**

"Silent night, holy night, all is calm . . ."

Jesse (The Body) Ventura said he'll likely bust up Steve Olsonowski with the inverted body vice when the two meet tonight, Christmas night, at the pro rasslin' show at the St. Paul Civic Center.

Even The Body, a nasty guy, cringes when he talks about the inverted body vice cuz that's a hold that inflicts severe pain. But you gotta do what you gotta do — even if it is Christmas.

"Oh come, all ye faithful . . ."

It may seem incongruous, this whole notion of a pro rasslin' match on a day of peace on earth, good will to people. But . . .

"It's a big, big night for wrestling," said local rasslin' promoter Wally Karbo, who expects that more than 18,000 people to show up for tonight's show. "It's a time when people are in a family way. We get a big family business on Christmas. Families from every walk of life."

Times and car bombs and military stuff are in right now."

So he will be wearing a military jacket when he steps into the ring. As a bow to the occasion, he might have ornaments, instead of earrings, dangling from his ears.

Other than that, it will be business as usual, meaning Ventura will be hoping the people hate him as he does evil things to Olsonowski.

"I'll be home for Christmas . . ."

Almost certainly, the 18,000 will be booing the Body, although he got a standing ovation when he scratched an opponent's eyes across the ropes in a recent television match. ("I think," explained The Body, "they love to hate me.")

What the 18,000 won't know is that Ventura will have been celebrating the joy of Christmas for three days.

Friday night, he and his wife and two children sat under their Christmas tree and had an intimate gift exchange with each other. On Christmas Eve, they shared gifts and good cheer with Ventura's in-laws.

The evil one, Ventura, has some theories on why rasslin's such big business on Christmas day.

"See," said The Body, "the people have been to church, they've celebrated Christ's birthday, they've gone through about all the wholesomeness they can deal with. I guarantee you, they'll be yellin' the same obscenities they're always yellin'."

"Oh holy night . . ."

Ventura isn't sure how he'll approach this Christmas match, although he'll almost certainly continue to wear the military-type clothing he began wearing a few weeks ago. He moved to military clothes from punk — although he's kept the six earrings — because he senses military is the shift of the country right now.

"You have to stay with the times or your routine grows old," Ventura said of his new costume. "My success has been to stay with the

Grew continued on page 3C

This morning and throughout most of the day, they were to be with Ventura's parents.

"I love Christmas," Ventura said.

It will stop being Christmas when he steps into the Civic Center. Then, it will be another day at the office. And that means it will be gruntin' and groanin' and hair-pullin' time.

"I got to forget about the joys of home life for a while," Ventura said. "Let's face it. People enjoy violent sports. I don't know why; they just do. Looks to me like Calvin Griffith should be takin' lessons from us. He's got politicians, all those big people tryin' to help him, they're beggin' people to buy tickets. But the fact is, wrestlin's red hot in the Twin Cities. Red hot." "We wish you a Merry Christmas . . ."

"We started running shows on Christmas several years ago," Karbo said. "It was a hit the first time. You see, the kids are tired of playing with their toys, everybody just wants to get out of the house and we've got something the whole family can enjoy."

No holds barred

Wrestling's lady in waiting changes champions

By STEVE SMITH

Staff Writer

THE LADY, alone in an old green-and-white pickup truck, pulled in to the Sportatorium's rutted gravel parking lot. She got out and walked up to the ticket window at the left side of the corrugated-tin building's big false front. Friday afternoon's setting sun glared across the ticket window; the lady had to squint to see the man inside.

"One general admission, please," she said. The wrestling matches were only a few hours away, and getting a good seat was critical. "I never miss a Friday night," the lady said. "I just wish I could get my husband to come with me."

In an office behind the ticket window sat Ken Mantell and Sunshine. Mantell, quite a wrestler himself in his day, now does his wrestling behind a desk as a promoter.

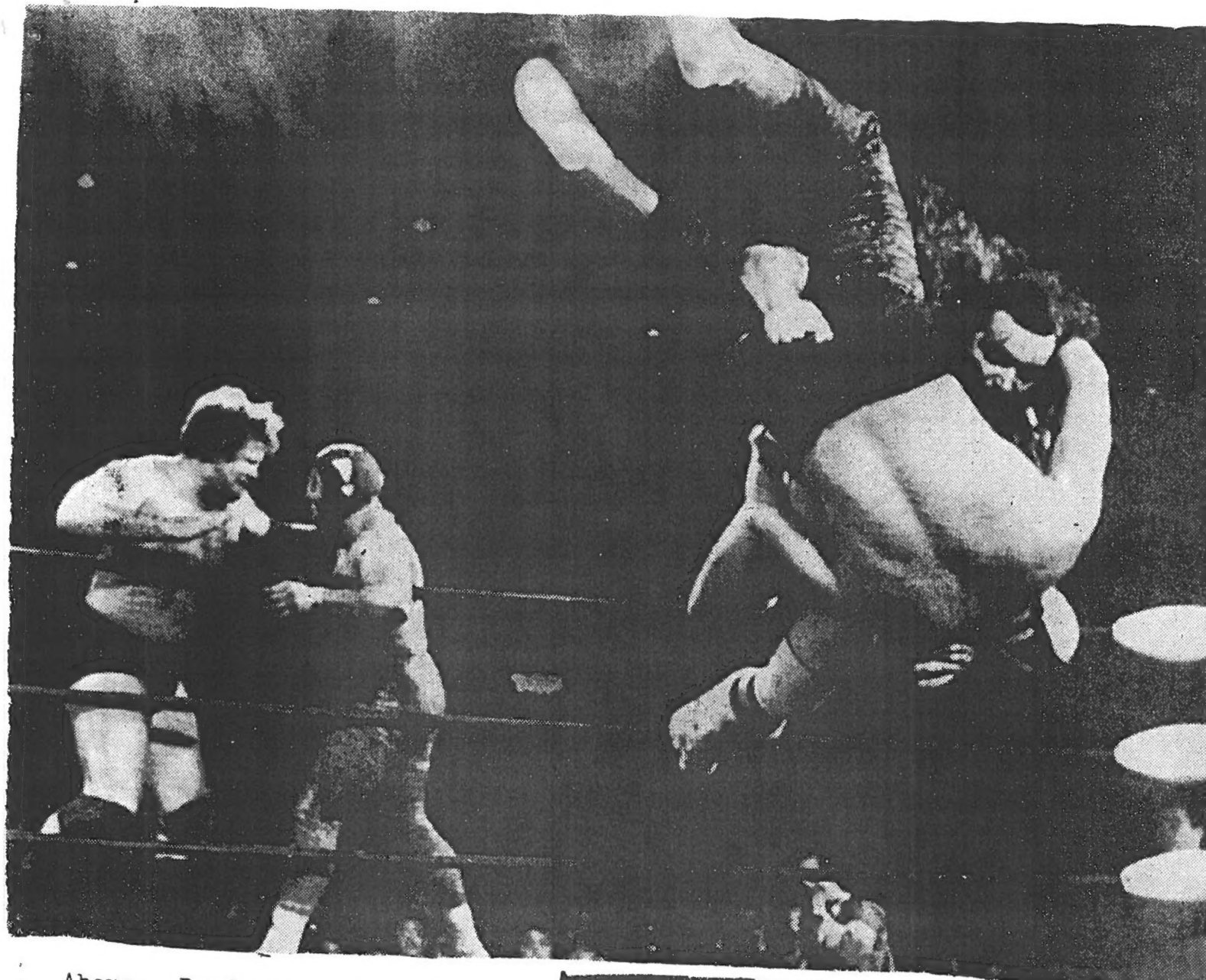
Sunshine, though, is just hitting her stride. She's seen weekly by millions of people on TV, and by thousands more in person. She admits that she can't walk into a local McDonald's restaurant without getting recognized. Though she has never wrestled a single fall, Sunshine is one hot ticket.

Sunshine is dressed in gold satin pants, a black T-shirt that says "Sunshine," and a shiny black jacket, the same outfit she'd wear that night. She has big green eyes and ash-blond hair with no trace of

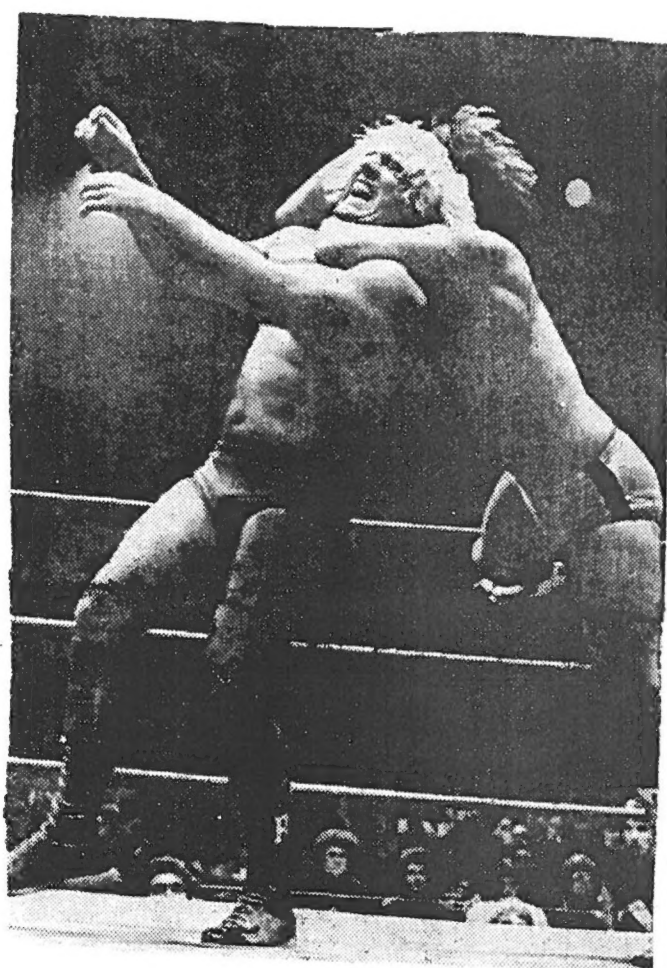
black roots. Sipping a Coke, she discusses her career: "I like it a lot."

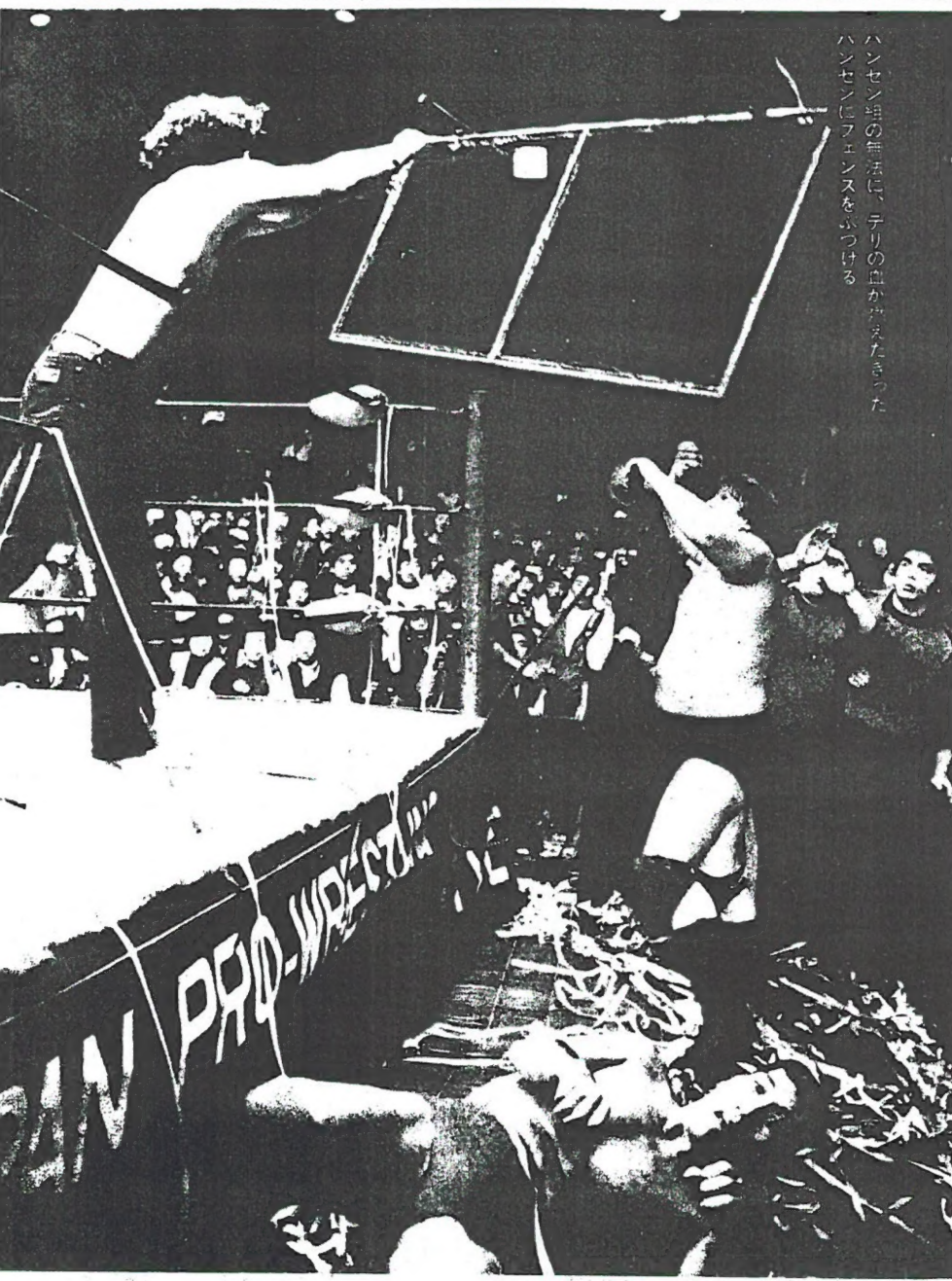
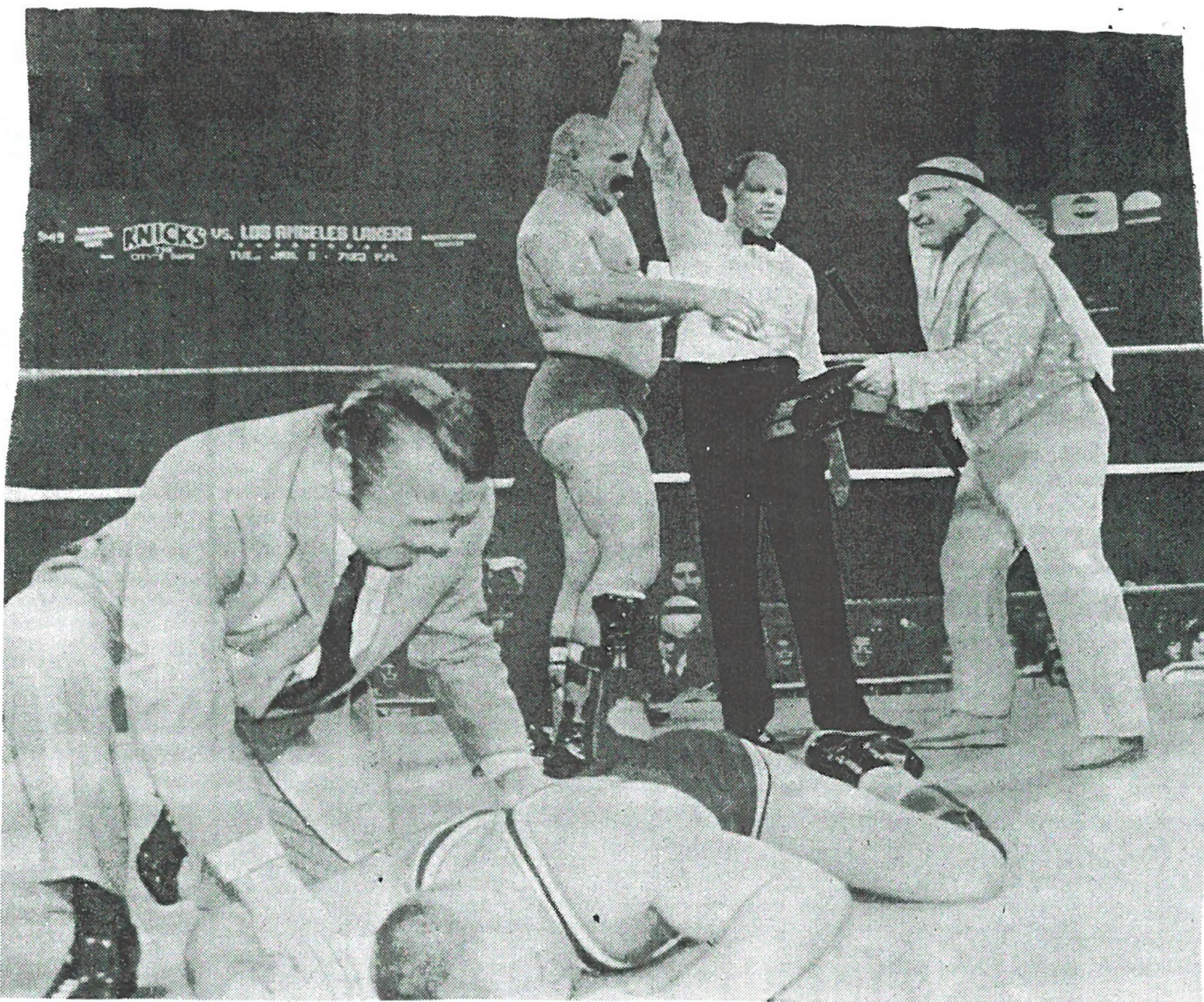
Sunshine is a woman of few words, so let's fill in the blanks. Several months ago, Sunshine turned up in the Dallas area with Gorgeous Jimmy Garvin, a 235-pound wrestler with a beard and lots of curly brown hair. Sunshine was his valet; this meant she looked after his flashy costumes and shouted back at the people who shouted at Garvin, who, in the wrestling world, is a bad guy. He trades on his vanity — sometimes he enters the ring preening himself as he gazes into a small mirror — and the fact that he and the local Von Erich boys are mortal enemies.

The Von Erichs — brothers Mike, See SUNSHINE on Page 4



Above: Brody powerslams (to say the least) Dos Caras. Right: Looks like a very happy hubby. Bottom: Ric Flair vs. David Von Erich from Dallas 12/25





ハンセン組の無法に、テリの血が流れた。ハンセンにフェンスをぶつける

LATE FLASH: AJPW (Baba's co.) moved out of prime time TV to 5:30-6:30 Saturday aft. . . Terry Funk (left from a 12/11 altercation with guess who) to return next year despite bad knees. . . Bockwinkel to defend for AJPW in Feb. . . AJPW wants to televise a U.S. card putting three title bouts Hansen vs Baba, Chavo vs Inoue, DiBiase vs Tenryu. . Shinma turned down Vince Sr's offer to run WWF shows opposite Inoki and Baba. Vince offered Shinma to take him throughout Asia. McMahon's still to promote in Japan this year. Vince Sr. negotiating with Tiger Mask. . . JAPAN SPORTS PRESS AWARDS: Most Valuable wrestler was Tsuruta; Most Outstanding was Chosyu; Best bout was Fujinami vs Chosyu; Tag team was Brody & Hansen and Hansen was best foreigner. . . World Class no longer recognizes Flair as champ and made ultimatum to NWA, strip Flair or we'll withdraw from NWA (don't know if this is promotional hype or something to this or not) . . . Hogan WILL win WWF title this spring/summer says an impeccable (if you watch Brent and the Greek you know what that means) source. . . Expect Inoki to beat Hogan for IWGP crown before that.

Wrestling fans eagerly awaiting

SUNSHINE — From Page One

David, Kerry, Kevin and father Fritz — have long dominated the "good guy" wrestling market in Dallas. Wrestlers like Garvin must be brought in to antagonize the Von Erichs and their fans. This conflict makes for a lively wrestling match, and lively box-office returns.

When Garvin strutted and preened, Sunshine was right behind him. She gave the women wrestling fans — and there are plenty of them — someone specific to loathe. Once, in Lubbock, "this crazy woman ran up behind me and grabbed me around the neck and tried to take me down," Sunshine says. People were always throwing cans, corn dog sticks and popcorn.

Before long, Sunshine was doing such a good job that Garvin decided to hire a valet for her. Another blonde, named Precious, became the valet's valet. Pay attention; this was an important development.

What happened next has been reconstructed with the help of KXTX-Ch. 39 employees Mickey Grant, Keith Mitchell and Dan Bynum. These are the three men most responsible for KXTX's "World Class Wrestling" program that airs Sunday

mornings at 11 a.m. on Ch. 39. Their show may be the most slickly produced wrestling program in the country; without a doubt it's the most widely distributed. It's syndicated throughout the world and seen regularly in Beirut, Lebanon; in Italy, South Africa, Australia and Japan, not to mention throughout the U.S. Grant estimates the total audience at somewhere around 20 million and growing.

Grant, Mitchell and Bynum break out the Sunshine Tapes — which have been aired at various times as part of their regular program — like a host might serve fine wine. Here is what happened:

An early pre-Precious tape sets the scene. Garvin lost a match to David Von Erich; the loser has to be the winner's servant for a day. Garvin and Sunshine show up at the Von Erich ranch and are forced to perform menial labor as Von Erich and wrestling announcer Bill Mercer sit in lawn chairs and laugh. This tape shows a dedicated Sunshine serving a grumbling Garvin valiantly. They dig post holes, haul hay, shovel out a barn, and worst of all, wash Von Erich's smelly old dog. Sunshine ends up soaking wet and covered

with what appears to be dog shampoo. Actually, Sunshine said later, that was foaming flea dip she was covered in, "and I got it in my mouth!" Yeech.

A later tape introduces Precious. Garvin and Sunshine sit by the pool in lounge chairs, as Precious sits at Sunshine's feet. Ever controversial, announcer Bill Mercer pointedly asks Garvin if he will enjoy "that same close relationship with Precious" as he does with Sunshine, and we all know what that means. Garvin gets mad, which happens frequently. Even then, an alert observer might spot something in Precious' manner that suggests she doesn't intend to be a valet's valet for long, and that Garvin may indeed eventually enjoy a "close relationship" with her.

Not long after, the wrestling worm turns. Garvin is in the middle of a match when both Precious and Sunshine try to help him out, much to the long-suffering referee's dismay. Garvin ends up getting tripped and losing the match. He gets mad, mistakenly blames Sunshine for tripping him, and orders her out of the camp.

Next tape: A bleating Sunshine appears at a "press conference" and

a Sunshine-Precious match

says that she is responsible for Garvin's success, and can't understand why he would abandon her this way. But you know what they say about a woman scorned: Sunshine has stolen Garvin's medical records and intends to give them to another wrestler, good guy Gentleman Chris Adams, to help Adams beat Garvin in their upcoming match. Eventually a crushed Sunshine collapses in tears as an embarrassed-looking fellow takes over the lectern and announces to the press, "No more questions!"

Soon after, vigilant announcer Bill Mercer tracks Garvin down at home. He rings the doorbell, which is answered by a half-clad Precious. Aha! So this was all a plot by Precious to boot Sunshine out. A mad and half-clad Garvin comes to the door, says bad things about Sunshine, and slams the door in Mercer's face, nearly mashing his microphone. The last scene has Mercer gamely ringing the doorbell again. Garvin doesn't answer.

By this time, Sunshine has decided to play it as it lays. Though she is allied with Gentleman Chris Adams, a very proper British wrestler, she stresses that she isn't his valet. "My valet days are over," Sunshine says.

Sources close to the wrestling world speculate that Sunshine is too popular now to be anyone's valet, especially Garvin's. (Anyway, "It will be a cold day in hell before I get back together with Garvin," she says.) Those sources are considering the possibility that Sunshine may become a manager, with her own stable of wrestlers, something she agrees is likely. "She certainly could motivate a wrestler," one source says. "She can certainly motivate me," another source echoes, nodding.

All this is pretty heady for a 21-year-old from Tampa, Fla., who would rather not discuss what her family thinks about her career. "In fact, I'm not even sure *what* they think about it," she says. Wrestling keeps you on the road, and she hasn't been home in a year.

Sunshine is shy and soft-spoken in person, which will come as a surprise to anyone who has seen her chase Precious around the ring, slap referees and scream at Garvin. How does she do it? "I really don't think about it when I'm doing it — the adrenaline takes over, I guess, and I just *do* it. Afterwards, though, I wonder, 'Did I really slap that referee?'"

Sunshine's finest moment may

come Sunday night at 8 as part of a major wrestling program at Reunion Arena. Several times a year, wrestling moves from the Sportatorium to Reunion, which is almost five times larger. Ken Mantell says that Reunion holds just under 20,000 people, and filling it won't be a problem; in fact, they'll probably have to turn people away. This presents a somewhat startling mental picture of Mom and Pop and the kids forsaking roasting chestnuts and new toys for a Christmas evening at the wrestling matches.

The card says that if Garvin loses his match Sunday, he'll let Precious fight Sunshine in the ring for five minutes, something Precious is apprehensive about but Sunshine can't wait for. "I'm going to give that little tramp just what she deserves," Sunshine says with great conviction.

Now the fans love Sunshine. "A lot of my fans are women," Sunshine says. "I think they identify with a woman who has been mistreated by a man, and can fight back." Beyond wrestling, Sunshine has no career ambitions. "I like the people I work with. And why should I leave wrestling? I've got the best seat in the house."

The grudge goes on



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